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Win A Sa
Saturn
details inside!!

GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZIN
VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 10

SQUARE'S

TOBAL NO.1 SIMPLY AMAZING!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PLAYSTATION:
CRASH BANDICOOT
PANDEMONIUM
STAR GLADIATORS
MEGAMAN 8
DIE HARD TRILOGY
WIPEOUT XL
SATURN:
FIGHTING VIPERS
BATMAN FOREVER
PRIMEWAVE
MAJOR DAMAGE
NINTENDO 64:
64-PAGE MARIO
STRATEGY PLUS
ADVANCED
PILOTWINGS
TACTICS!
SO, I'M A LITTLE LATE...
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD! IT'S IN HERE!

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS'
BLOOD OMEN
LEGACY OF KAIN
AN EPIC ADVENTURE

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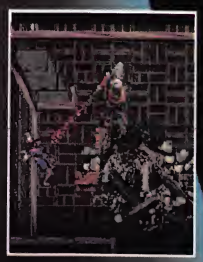
CONTENTS

COME HAVE A DRINK WITH KAIN...
AFTER OVER TWO YEARS IN DEVELOPMENT, CRYSTAL DYNAMICS'/ SILICON KNIGHTS' EPIC ADVENTURE IS BUT WEEKS AWAY...
PAGE 56

JOURNEY TO JAPAN...
TAKUHI GIVES YOU AN UP CLOSE LOOK AT *FINAL FANTASY VII* AND MORE, AFTER A WEEK ON THE ROAD WITH SONY, IN JAPAN.
PAGE 106

CRASH BANDICOOT
PAGE 60

FIGHTING VIPERS
PAGE 94



COVER STORY
AN EPIC ADVENTURE AWAITS, OVER 100 HOURS IN LENGTH

SUPER MARIO 64
PAGE 34

TOBAL NO. 1
PAGE 84

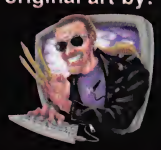
PANDEMONIUM
PAGE 64

PILOTWINGS 64
PAGE 44

RELOADED
PAGE 16

TUROK 64
PAGE 52

GAMEFAN original art by:



TERRY WOLFINGER

EDITORIAL ZONE 6
MOST WANTED/TOP TEN 10
DNN: VF 3 14
GF UP TO THE MINUTE: RELOADED 16
VIEWPOINT 18
HOCUS POCUS 20
NINTENDO 64 THEATER 34
PLAYSTATION NATION 56
SATURN SECTOR 94
GEN 32 106
GAMEFAN SPORTS 124
JAPAN NOW 133
OTHER STUFF 136
POSTMEISTER 137

SUDDENLY, THINGS ARE GETTING PERSONAL.

Now, it's your reputation on the line. And time to leave your mark in this perfect translation of the #1 arcade phenomenon. On your side is the innovative custom combo system, now allowing you to link together your own series of brutal attacks. You'll need every possible advantage to take on a total of 18 fighters, the most ever in Street Fighter legend. Remember, hesitation is deadly. Because in the end, it's all about who's the last one left standing.

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PlayStation

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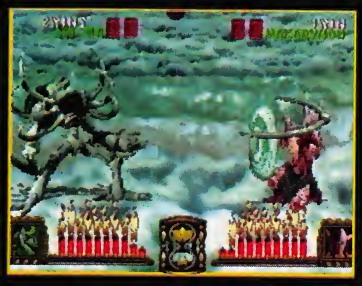
FIGHT LIKE A MONSTER...

BRING A MOP...
THIS IS GONNA GET MESSY.

FREAKISH CARNAGE IN SPRAWLING MULTI-PLANE ARENAS!



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THAT'LL MAKE YOUR HEAD SPIN!

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There's a rumble in hell...and you're invited. Twelve psychotic monsters fight fist-and-fang in the darkest, goriest head-to-head combat ever! In bone-chilling interactive, multi-levelled environments, the beasts of the undead unleash clawfuls of sickening supermoves in a bid to be crowned King of Darkness! Overflowing with blood, guts, drool and slime, Battle Monsters is mangling multi-hit, mid-air fighting with super-fast scaling, chopping, stabbing, gouging, morphing and dying. Feeling lucky, freak?

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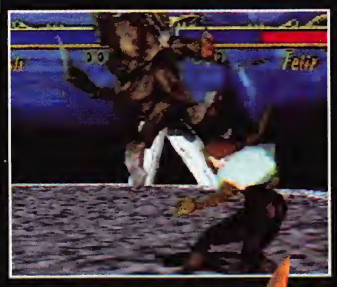

MONSTERS KNOW NO MERCY!

THE MORE YOU WIN THE STRONGER, FASTER AND MEANER YOU GET!

3-D POLYGONAL SLUG-FEST WITH BUCKETS OF GORE!

GOT SOMETHING STUCK IN YOUR THROAT?

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DIE LIKE A FREAK.

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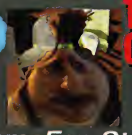

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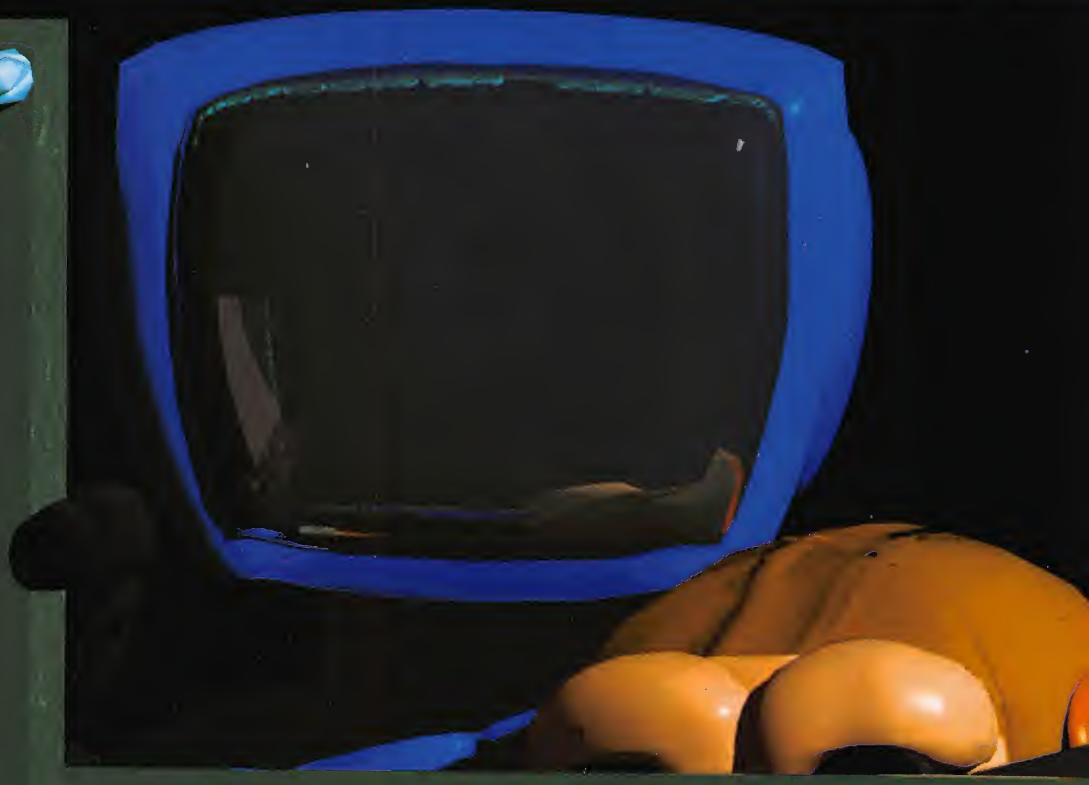


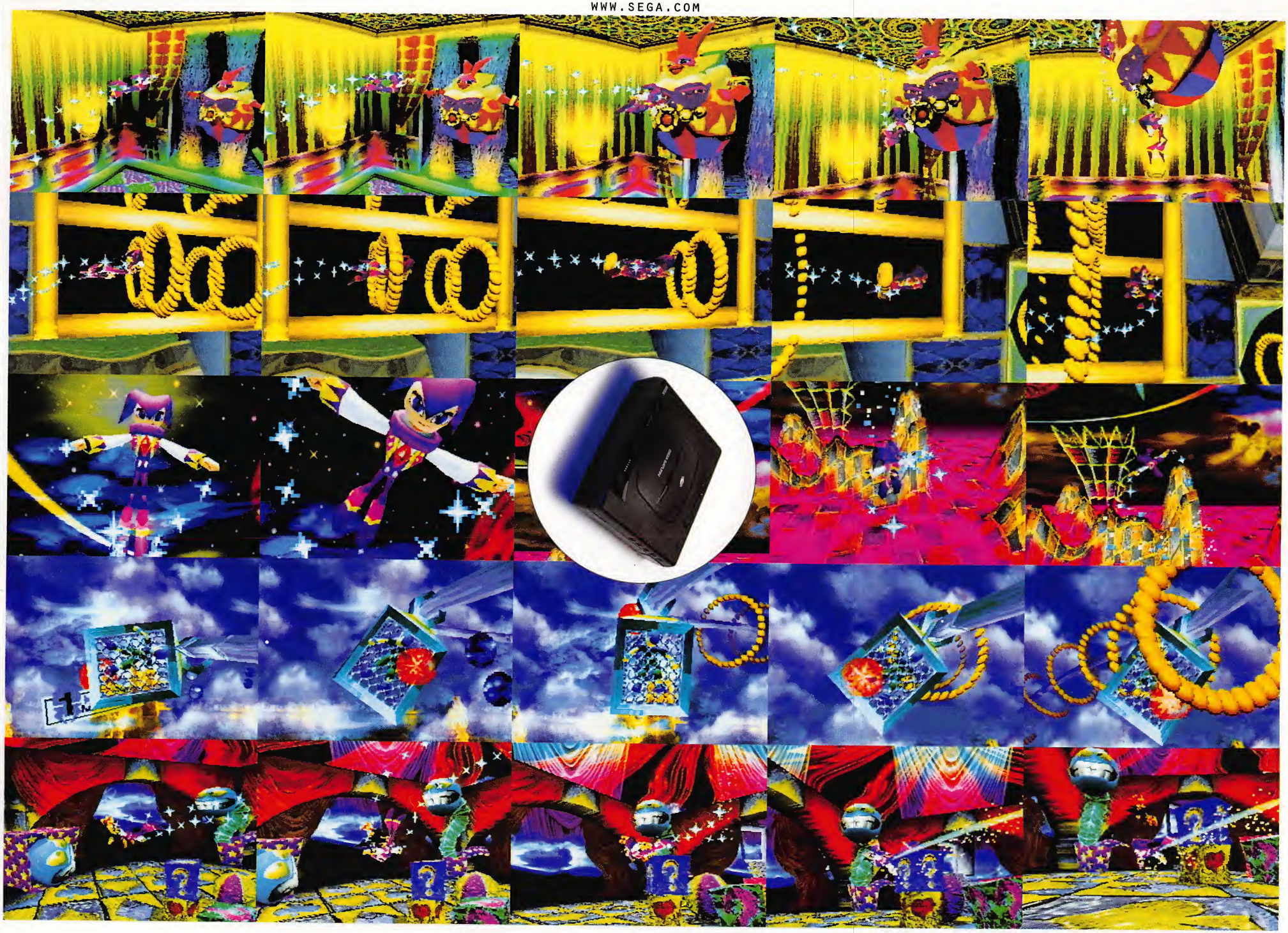
This issue marks our four year anniversary creating GameFan. From a back room no bigger than a walk-in closet, (make that a big walk-in closet) we made issue one. We printed 5000 copies, tossed 'em in the back of Jay's Cherokee and drove around the San Fernando Valley begging newsstands to display it. Now, four years later, against all odds (little publications with small initial investments don't get here), we're a top book in the category. We like to think that's due to the fact that everyone who ever has, does and will work here at GF loves video games. It's never been about anything else and it never will be. As publishers, it has been our job to inform and hopefully entertain you, and in turn you've helped make us what we are... a fine equation if there ever was one. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those companies who stuck with us in the early going, and all who support us now as well (you know who you are). I personally would like to thank David Perry, David Siller, Jay Moon, Seth Mendelson, Terry Tang, Mike Latham, Ken Lobb, Tom Tanaka, Tommy Tallarico, Lori Thorton, Jeremy Smith, Perrin Kaplan and Pamela Kelly. These are some of the people that have made working in this industry such a joy for me. I would also like to thank the original remaining members of GameFan for sticking with me through the pre-Metropolis days: Jay Puryear (who's now psychically attached), Andrew Cockburn, Kei Kuboki, and Terry Wolfinger. I feel that now (finally) GF has the best staff ever, a complete bunch of gaming junkies whom it has taken years to assemble. They are all highly talented, dedicated individuals who spend the better part of their lives glued to computers all in the name of quality. Take a look at this issue and see if you don't notice some much needed maintenance. And there's more where that came from! Oh, about that photo... see what four years of publishing does to a man!

PREPARE TO FLY.

[and soar and spin and climb and dive and look way, way down on everything else]

NiGHTS™ into dreams...

IS HERE.



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Never, ever, ever, have you experienced anything like this.
Never, ever, ever, have you been able to fly, fluid and free, in real-time 3D.

Not until NiGHTS.

The most revolutionary next-generation game ever. The first true showcase of Sega Saturn's stunning capabilities. The technological tour de force that has everyone in the gaming world absolutely spun.

The Story

One of the most immersive, mystical gaming experiences ever, NiGHTS establishes an entirely new gameplay paradigm. Think of it as psychodrama, an express escalator into the schizophrenic, mind-bending virtual world of your dreams. Ricocheting between lighter-than-air reveries and dark, macabre nightmares, NiGHTS brings you face to face with both your guiding spirits and your innermost demons.

The World

Created by the renowned Sonic Team, NiGHTS is a full-on 3D masterpiece. A world with some of the most vibrant, inspired, original graphics ever conceived by fevered imaginations. A world with deep, lush, dreamscape realities, its own micro-climates, even its own natural order. Imagine. Smoke, fog, clouds, rain, and water that appear in multiple levels of transparency. Waterfalls, currents, wind, and, yes, a tornado that all follow the laws of fluid physics. Independent light sources that play on both action and backgrounds at different, shifting luminosities. All backed by a raging soundtrack that blends jazz, orchestra, rock, world music, and effects.

The Gameplay

NiGHTS screams along at banshee speed. Despite massive 3D demands, its adaptive speed management system supports both breakneck gameplay and breakthrough environments. Witness its ability to replicate the true sensations of flight. Its lightning multiple morph sequences. Its over twenty tracking camera angles that scroll-shift in real time. And its omnipresent symphony of 3D positional sound.

The New 3D Control Pad

Engineered specifically to intensify the NiGHTS experience, Sega Saturn's 3D Control Pad establishes a new benchmark in smooth and dynamic operation. In analog mode, its pulse-sensitive thumbpad enables unprecedented maneuverability at breathtaking speeds. Switching to digital mode allows compatibility with almost all other Sega Saturn games. (Please call 1-800-USA-SEGA for any compatibility questions.)

The Benediction

There's more, of course. But the rest is up to you. So kick off your walking shoes. Say your prayers. And fly. No way you'll sleep. But you'll have wicked good dreams.

NiGHTS™ into dreams...

ONLY ON

SEGA SATURN™

TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
3. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
4. *Street Fighter Alpha* - PS
5. *Chrono Trigger* - SNES
6. *Killer Instinct 2* - Arcade
7. *Panzer Zwei* - Saturn
8. *DK Country 2* - SNES
9. *Tekken 2* - Arcade
10. *Final Fantasy III* - SNES

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
2. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
3. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
4. *Virtua Fighter 3* - Arcade
5. *KI*[64] - Nintendo[64]
6. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
7. *Zelda*[64] - Nintendo[64]
8. *Tomb Raider* - PS
9. *SF Alpha 2* - PS/Saturn
10. *Mario Kart R* - Nintendo[64]

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:

Jim Curry

Crystal Dynamics

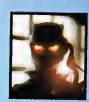
1. *Legacy of Kain* - PS
2. *Duke Nukem 3D* - PC
3. *Pandemonium* - PS
4. *Samurai Shodown 3* - Neo•Geo
5. *Suzuka 8 Hours* - Arcade
6. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
7. *Pilotwings*[64] - Nintendo[64]
8. *Civilization 2* - PS
9. *A-10 Tank Killer 1.0* - PC
10. *Quake* - PC

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
2. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
3. *Legacy of Kain* - PS
4. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
5. *Pandemonium* - PS

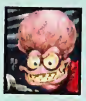
5. *Tomb Raider* - Saturn
6. *Pilotwings*[64] - Nintendo[64]
7. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn
8. *Overkill* - PS
10. *Waverace*[64] - Nintendo[64]

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
4. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
5. *Popolocrois* - PS



6. *Virtua Fighter Kids* - Saturn
7. *Star Ocean* - Super Famicom
8. *Torico* - Saturn
9. *Policenauts* - PS
10. *Resident Evil* - PS

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
4. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
5. *Tobal No. 1* - PS



6. *Snatcher* - Sega CD
7. *Star Ocean* - Super Famicom
8. *Tactics Ogre* - Super Famicom
9. *Policenauts* - PS
10. *Resident Evil* - PS

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Star Gladiator* - PS
3. *Tekken 2* - PS
4. *King's Field 3* - PS
5. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]

6. *Pilotwings*[64] - Nintendo[64]
7. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* - Arcade
8. *Quake* - PC
9. *Nights* - Saturn
10. *Ridge Racer Revolution* - PS

1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Tobal No. 1* - PS
3. *SF Alpha 2* - PS
4. *Star Ocean* - S. Famicom
5. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS

6. *Bio Hazard* - PS
7. *Policenauts* - PS
8. *KOF '95* - PS
9. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
10. *Y's I & II* - PC Engine

1. *Bomberman SS* - Saturn
2. *Die Hard Trilogy* - PS
3. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
4. *Tomb Raider* - Saturn
5. *Madden '97* - PS/Saturn

6. *Star Gladiator* - PS
7. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
8. *Psychic Killer* - Saturn
9. *Thunderforce Goldpack* - Saturn
10. *Virtua Fighter 3* - Arcade

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
Your choice of a 32X, VIRTUAL BOY, or NOMAD.

Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize:
A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations

to last month's winners:

First Prize:
Gabriel Colon, Port Jarvis, NY

Second Prize:
Hector Rivera, Staten Island, NY

Third Prize:
Fausto Sanchez, San Jacinto, CA

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INSOMNIAC GAMES

universal interactive studios

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PlayStation™

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"Looks gorgeous and plays extremely well... even the loading screen is cool."
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"Entirely worthwhile, challenging and constantly entertaining."
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TEEN
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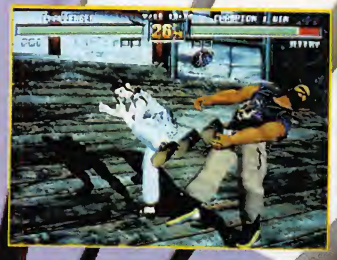
DNN
DIEHARD NEWS NETWORK

Virtua Fighter 3

The next wave of fighting games has finally arrived, courtesy of SEGA's arcade master developer Yu Suzuki and his programming team. The name of this fighter? Virtua Fighter 3, of course! An almost-complete version of the game was unveiled at the PIO exhibition center in Kamata, Tokyo, where select members of the press were privileged to see the most in-depth 3D beat-'em-up on the planet. Those who still harbored opinions that this game wouldn't be of the same quality as the pre-release pictures were soon eating their humble pie, as Pai, Akira, Wolf and the rest of the team stepped out in full textured-mapped and light-sourced glory, and began slapping each other about to the gasps and delighted cries of onlookers.

Yes, we're happy to say that this is the future of 3D fighting games for a number of reasons. Firstly, the action is quicker; all characters now moving like greased lightning with no polygon break-up (yes, even the Sumo wrestler), have a multitude of new moves and even speed blurs on their more powerful hits (like in Soul Edge and Star Gladiators) and of course, sport a collection of new fighting clothes (special mention to Shun Di for his beanie hat/combat pantaloons combination!). A more in-depth feature on play mechanics will appear next month, but for the moment, let's concentrate on those backgrounds!

The camera pans in on the combat, whether it be on the Great Wall of China or a deserted subway station, and the 3D backdrop moves with it, stretching into the distance to microscopic levels of detail. Ring-outs are now much more spectacular; try hoofing your foe out of the combat arena and they'll fall fifty feet onto the ground! And of course, these arenas aren't flat; you fight on a sloping roof, steps and a sandy beach (where you can even wade into the water!). Make no mistake; this game reaches levels of graphical detail untouched by anything out there. Be sure to come back next issue as we take this mammoth arcade monster to pieces... Prepare for the fight of your life!



VIRTUA FIGHTER 3 IS IN DEVELOPMENT. ALL SCREENSHOTS ARE TAKEN FROM THE DEVELOPMENT VERSION.

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ENTER TO WIN A SEGA SATURN!

Just answer the three easy questions below and you could win a Sega Saturn with NiGHTS

Here's what you could win!

GRAND PRIZE (2 WINNERS) - SEGA SATURN & NiGHTS!

1ST PRIZE (5 WINNERS) - NiGHTS GAMEPAK!

2ND PRIZE (15 WINNERS) - A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMEFAN MAGAZINE!

1) Yuji Naka, the force behind the original Sonic the Hedgehog, just completed his first Saturn masterpiece. What's this game's title?

2) Name the ONLY next generation gaming system powerful enough for NiGHTS - Sega's mind-blowing new release?

3) What hot new Sega Saturn peripheral magnifies the dynamic flight experience in NiGHTS?

Answer the three questions correctly, write your answers on a postcard and mail it to NiGHTS CONTEST: GameFan magazine, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Be sure to include your name, address and age. All entries must be received by November 30th, 1996.

NiGHTS

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RE-LOADED

Strap on your personal rocket launcher and button up your flowery dress, you sickos; the mother of all blood-fests is coming, with more gore than ever before! That's right, GameFan has had the very first look at the follow-up to *Loaded*, and we're pleased to report that even at this stage (the game's only 10% complete!) the game looks stunning. Little is known about this follow-up, apart from the name, *Reloaded*, but what we saw completely blew us away... in more ways than one!!

The first aspect of the game that's been improved are the level design and graphics. Of the three levels available, no monsters had been programmed in (save for some disgusting bloated maggots), but the stages are truly a work of art, seamlessly blending sprites against a *3D* polygon level layout with undulating hills, falling rocks and mechanical lifts. What shocked us was the lack of pixelation on the scenic textures when up close; everything's just so detailed!

Of course, some of the old crew return (such as Fwank), along with a newcomer armed with a laser cannon strapped to his arm (this creating the now-famous light-sourced glow when fired), but what most amazed me the most was the first level itself... it actually takes place on a huge (and still living) demon! Yes, really!! Then the assembled GameFan crew whooped and hollered when we discovered our character could blow chunks of flesh off this fallen entity in the most disgusting way possible! Fancy cleaving off a demonic nipple or two? No problem! What about shooting out the demon's entire face? You got it! You bet we'll have more on this ground-breaking title as soon as we can!

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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality

BURNING ROAD
PLAYSTATION
PLAYMATES-CD
RACING

Burning Road a *Daytona* clone? No way! Are their huge hilly dirt tracks in *Daytona*? No. How 'bout big nasty jumps? Nuh-uh. How 'bout monstrous 4-wheelers? Sorry, wrong again. Any snow? I didn't think so. *BR* is only similar in its graphic presentation (stretched out cars and 3 cameras). This is a hot driver any way you slice it. I personally dug the singing and think the tunes are quite spectacular. Chief H. must be hittin' the snake juice again.

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 7 — **88**

Burning Road actually caught me off guard. The courses are constructed of huge texture-mapped polygons that give the game's environment a nice, big, arcade feel. The superbly texture-mapped poly-cars and trucks are also extremely large, with bright colors and cool over-the-top design. Seeing the game in motion is a 30 fps joy that flies by with only the slightest of pop-up. I liked the giant size of the tracks, and they dip, turn, and twist through some nice, very *Daytona*-ish scenery. *BR* is a good racer with solid play worthy of an arcade racer.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 6 — **84**

Well, PlayStation owners don't have to buy a Saturn and *Daytona* any more! *Burning Road* is one of the most blatant copies I've ever seen, right down to the Race Leader sign, car radar and actual graphics! But hey, when the game's this fast, fluid and fun, who's complaining? The game is quite tough (except when you choose the black pickup truck), those mirrored courses are cool, and there's enough secrets in there to keep you amused. Recommended, but get ready for the cheesiest speech and music you've EVER heard.

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 4 O 3 — **85**

DIE HARD TRILOGY
PLAYSTATION
FOX INTERACTIVE-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

The original *DH* flick was hot stuff, the 2nd & 3rd, mildly amusing, yet this whole game is juiced with thrill-a-second button-poundin'/shootin' thrills. All three engines excel in their respective categories, and the explosions are bigger, brighter, and better than you'll see anywhere else. You honestly get three totally different games, and they're all really good, especially the driving. This highly playable 3-in-1 joyfest should be enjoyed by all. Probe has done the trilogy proud, and Fox has a hit on their hands.

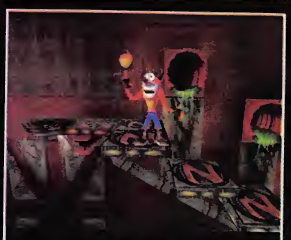
G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 8 — **90**

There's three whole games in one package here, and this is reason enough to buy the game, but thankfully the Probe boys and girls have actually provided compelling gameplay for all three *Die Hards*. Although a little rough around the edges graphically (especially on the second game; the weakest of the three) and some repetitive sampling, you've got more than enough gameplay on your hands. And the third *Die Hard* game is the most fun by far, simply due to the amount of pedestrian carnage you can cause!

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 9 — **90**

This is the way to do it! *Die Hard Trilogy* is one of the best action games of all time. There's virtually three full, unique games, on one huge (almost 600 megs!) disk. You get overhead action, *Virtua Cop*-like shooting levels, and insane driving mayhem with plenty of gameplay depth and incredible length. The 3D is stunning, the awesome original music score keeps you moving, and the control is great. The most fun I've had blowin' stuff up this year!

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 9 — **94**



CRASH BANDICOOT
PLAYSTATION
SONY-CD
ACTION PLATFORM

With every word ever written in GF on *Crash Bandicoot* coming from my hands, it's no secret that I see this as a major turning point for the platform category. *Crash* is so far beyond anything else in its class that I truly classify it as an event. It's as finely produced a piece of software I have ever played and visually *Crash* truly is in a league of its own. Nothing compares. This game belongs in every home as a testament to how far video games have come, right along side *Mario 64*. If these two games are a sign of what's to come, then we've got a lot to look forward to in the years ahead.

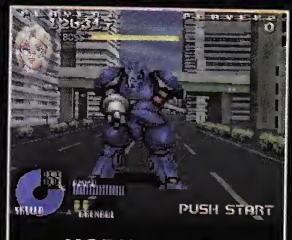
G 10 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 9 — **100**

I must be having visions of the future of video games. Can it be? Can this game exist? Apparently, it does, and it's headed our way September 9th. *Crash* has the best graphics ever seen in a video game, excepting *Virtua Fighter 3*. I'm not even kidding. And the gameplay lives up to the quality of the polygonal environments... What this all boils down to is an *instantaneous* purchase on your part.

G 10 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 9 — **99**

I could fill many pages trying to explain exactly how cool *Crash Bandicoot* is. Sadly though, I only have this small box, so I'll keep it short. First of all, *Crash* has graphics so good, they're scary. The textures are super detailed, there's no pop-up, there's almost no pixels... It's beautiful. Thankfully, the gameplay's just as appealing. Almost reminiscent of the old "8-bitters" in difficulty and play mechanics, *Crash* is addictive and loads of fun to play. This game is simply an experience, and come September 9th, a bunch of PlayStation owners are going to be very happy.

G 10 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 9 — **99**



HORNED OWL
PLAYSTATION
SONY-CD
SHOOTING

Hot art, smooth 3D, and... A GUN!! What could possibly go wrong? Well, quite a bit it seems. *Horned Owl*'s a scary bird. It utilizes a good 3D engine with smooth polygons and an OK frame rate but the action is just plain boring. So many green robo dudes, in wave after boring wave just keep pouring out. Shoot... Shoot! Wait... (long wait) Shoot! Anyone remember *The Super Spy*? 'Nuff said. Unless you live to hold a plastic gun, pass.

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 4 O 6 — **60**

I was hoping Sony might be able to fix this one up for the American release, but alas, no. As I said when we did the original, this is the most tedious shooting game I've ever played. The backgrounds are nice, sure, and I like the Masamune Shirow animation and character design, but outside of that, this game's as dull as they come. Worth playing once, but never, ever again.

G 8 C 5 P 3 M 1 O 4 — **52**

Much was expected from Sony's answer to the Saturn *Virtua Cop*, but instead PlayStation owners have a tiny blue phazer and a shooting game full of pixelly 2D and badly drawn robots that attack in monotonous waves. I know what this supposed 3D wonder console is capable of, and it's certainly much more than this ridiculously easy blasting title. The only saving grace are the animated cut scenes, but even they lack flair and appeal. Please wait for *Time Crisis*; this boring offering really isn't worth the bother.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 4 O 6 — **52**

LOADED
SATURN
INTERPLAY-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

Loaded plays better on the Saturn than it did on PlayStation, and it looks just as good – well, almost at least. It's a heapin' helpin' of wild blastin' that's for sure. Guts flyin', heads poppin'... you know, fun for the whole family! True, the big "L" can drag on a tad once you've gotten over the initial shock value, but it's a worthy blaster if there ever was one. The tunes stomp along nicely as well. From the PS to the Saturn they go, and go, and go...

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 7 — **80**

Another PS port heads for Saturn. *Loaded* is still pretty much *Loaded*. Albeit not the shocker it was back when 32 bit had that new car freshness, it still provides a visually intense and not altogether mindless action/shooting challenge. I shall never tire of its graphic appeal or hot lighting and the soundtrack still plays over and over in my head. Gremlin has done a fine job.

G 8 C 8 P 6 M 7 O 5 — **79**

Loaded has come over to the Saturn in a smashing way. All of the 3D power that was found throughout the PlayStation title can be found here as well: the Saturn pulls it off pretty flawlessly. And as far as gameplay... Well, it's the same bloodfest that PlayStation owners everywhere got into a year ago. *Loaded*'s not for me, but hey - I commend Gremlin for the perfect conversion.

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 3 O 6 — **70**

Just in time for Halloween, here comes Naxat's (via Acclaim) strangely strange digitized fighting freak-a-thon, *Battle Monsters*. Those of you looking for *MK*, or *SF2* welded to a monstrous theme, look somewhere else. *Battle Monsters* plays quite differently. I don't mean that badly, there are twelve moves per, and some are mighty nasty with bright bursting skulls and ethereal bursts of light. I actually grew fond of *BM*'s peculiar gameplay, using multi-tiered, massive environments.

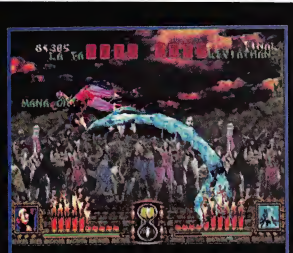
G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **70**

Here's a fighter I can live without. While its monster theme is pretty cool, the gameplay can only be classified as weird. There's enough moves, but the games balance seems off and rounds can be played out too many different ways. I suppose the spooky production and OK graphics will lure some but fighting purists need not apply. A novelty game that would have found a home in the '80s.

G 7 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 8 **68**

After playing *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, I was beckoned over for a bout or two of *Battle Monsters*. Thanks a bunch! Low fireball, high fireball, kick when they jump... and I completed the game. Great gameplay, huh? Excruciatingly badly animated pixelly characters (think: *MK* on the GameGear). Multi-level stages that serve no purpose. This would have made a second-rate Genesis game three years ago. Are you starting to get the picture? Take it away from me, I'm starting to have conniptions.

G 3 C 5 P 4 M 3 O 2 **37**



BATTLE MONSTERS
SATURN
ACCLAIM-CD
FIGHTING

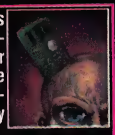
Bomberman makes the jump to 32-bit in flying colors and comes away a big winner, at least around here. Literally everyone who's picked it up can't put it down. Up to ten players can dash about blowing each other to smithereens in splendid 32-bit color. Even Bonk and Master Higgins are along for the fun. Better graphics, hot music, great bosses, more power-ups, and cool anime sequences make this the best *Bomberman* ever.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 7 **90**

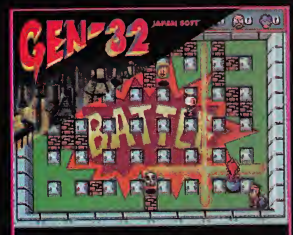
This is the best *Bomberman* I've ever played, and believe me, I'm their number one fan! There's plenty of options, awesome music, a really cool cartoon intro and three different modes of play (and even *Bomberman* pads and multi-links!), but when you actually sit down to a *Bomberman* session though, you'll remember just how addictive this title is. Yep, everything is here, from the dinosaurs to the jelly bombs, along with a massive story game, a huge multi-player link up mode, and even a ten-player blast fest that has to be seen to be believed (you'll need at least a 28-inch TV to see it, though)! Buy it now, enjoy it forever.

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 9 O 7 **92**

Bomberman continues its reign as the almighty king of addiction! 32-bit has treated our little bomber buddy kindly, with killer anime sequences and an amazing soundtrack. There's three different play modes, wicked new power-ups, and loads of masterfully designed levels. The colorful graphics and perfect gameplay are vintage *Bomberman*, and with the addition of a ten (10!) player battle mode, crazy *Bomberman* competitions are better than ever. A blazing hot update of the smokin' classic.



G 8 C 10 P 10 M 10 O 9 **95**



BOMBERMAN SS
SATURN
HUDSON-CD
ACTION/PUZZLE

Put this puppy on a plane and ship it! A fine, hand-drawn work of role playing magic this is! The detail in *Popolocrois* alone is reason enough to keep you playing, but there's a great battle engine, amusing soundtrack and good story here for you as well. I haven't seen hand drawn art this good since *LandStalker*. Heaps of spells, a revolving character scenario and busloads of animation. Too bad the characters are sort of non-descript. Wrap it up anyway!

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 8 **80**

Popolocrois has a weird taste. It has beautifully drawn scenery, completely hand-drawn graphics, and a fun quest, but it also has lame character art, super-repetitive music, and way too many battles. It's not a bad game, if anything this is one of the best 32-bit RPGs ever made, but I found those little negative points super irritating. I'd still recommend this game to everyone, this is a title many RPG fans will love, and I hope it comes out here. I was just expecting more, and can't help but feel a bit disappointed by the final product. Definitely worth checking out though...

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **80**

Despite this game's cute exterior, there's a meaty RPG hidden beneath. Cool storyline, good battle system, amazing graphics and a fast-paced quest land this one the spot on my PS shelf right next to *Genso Suikoden*. The only problem is the music... Let's strive for at least *15* second long tracks in *Popolocrois 2*, okay?

G 9 C 6 P 7 M 5 O 9 **91**

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PLAYSTATION
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CONGRATULATIONS!

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Danville, California

Second Prize: James J. Mielke
New York, New York

Third Prize: Andre Howard
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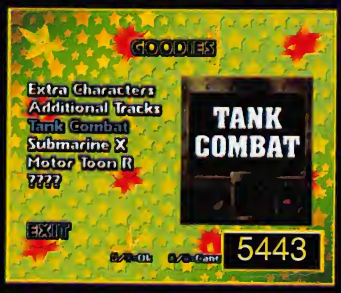
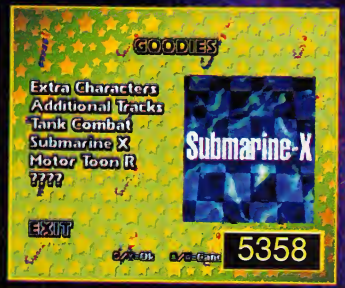
MOTORTOON GRAND PRIX 2 — PLAYSTATION IMPORT — DEBUG CODES!

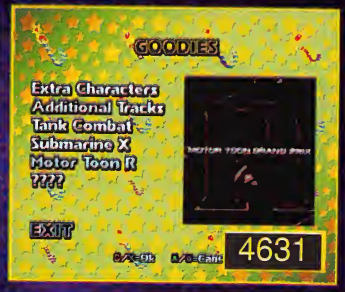


The cute little racing game we all have learned to love has more cheats! Normally, you would have to beat the game on all of the difficulty levels to get the extra "GOODIES." But all of you people (who are, perhaps, not as skilled as I) can input this DEBUG CODE to get the GOODIES right away! Just go into the GOODIES option and hold all four L and R buttons and press SELECT. Bingo! Now all you have to do is input the following digits as follows:

1	R1	7	L1 & R2 & R1	d	L2 & L1 & R1
2	R2	8	L2	e	L2 & L1 & R2
3	R2 & R1	9	L2 & R1	f	L2 & L1 R2 & R1
4	L1	a	L2 & R2		
5	L1 & R2	b	L2 & R2 & R1		
6	L1 & R2	c	L2 & L1		

ROD WUI
DANVILLE, CA





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FADE TO BLACK — PLAYSTATION — LEVEL CODES

Input the following passwords as follows:

Level 1:	■ ● ▲ ✕ ● ■	Level 9:	▲ ✕ ✕ ▲ ● ▲
Level 2:	▲ ● ✕ ● ■ ✕	Level 10:	✕ ▲ ■ ● ▲ ✕
Level 3:	✕ ● ✕ ● ▲ ✕	Level 11:	● ■ ✕ ✕ ■ ✕
Level 4:	✕ ■ ▲ ● ● ▲	Level 12:	■ ▲ ✕ ■ ● ✕
Level 5:	■ ■ ▲ ✕ ✕ ▲	Level 13:	✕ ✕ ● ▲ ● ▲
Level 6:	▲ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ●		
Level 7:	● ● ▲ ✕ ▲ ✕		
Level 8:	■ ■ ✕ ▲ ■ ■		

ANDRE HOWARD
PINOLE, CA

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Waka and Chief Hambleton bring you some interesting bits and pieces... and a couple of challenges!

BARNSTORMING - Take to the skies in Little States (preferably clad in feathers on strapped to a Rocket Belt) and head for those huge red barns. You can actually fly *into* them and out the other side. Pointless, but difficult to accomplish without hitting the walls!

CAN YOU FLY, BOBBY? - Flapping about can be fun... but can you control your Birdman with any degree of competence? I reckon so, but to test this out, why not try flapping your winged player down the tunnel system in Crescent Island and out the other side? Now that really would require a master of airborne flying at the controls!

FLAGS APLENTY - There's a number of flags to be found, texture-mapped with N64 logos and the stars and stripes (to name but two). Have you spotted them all?

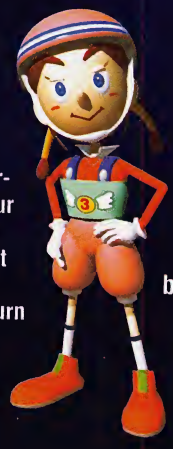
BUZZING CPU HANG GLIDERS
Have you found all the drone hang gliders in the game? Just see how close you can get to them, and then recoil in horror when you discover that they're all faceless!! AAARRGHHH!!

DODGE THE LIGHT PLANE
There's another moving target to watch for; a light plane that lands at San Francisco airport every two minutes. This metal bird is too fast to catch in the air, so why not wait on the runway floor for it? It'll pass straight through you!

JESUS IS HERE!!
We've also spotted the so-called 'Jesus Rock' that *Intelligent Gamer Online* have found; as you can tell from the screenshot. Is this the face of the son of God? The Turin Shroud of the Nineties? Or just some random textures? You be the judge!

"IT'S-A MEE!! WARIO!"
Fancy removing that Brooklyn plumber from Mount Rushmore and replacing him with his arch enemy? Well, select Cannonball, aim for the plumber (easy with that nose!) and KABOOOM!! Mario's face is removed, and the great gurning chap takes his place. Oh, by the way, the Mario/Wario head stays like this until you hit it again with a human Cannonball, meaning you can inspect Wario's head at close quarters with the Rocket Belt should you wish to.

HIDDEN TELEPORTS
Waka and myself are rounding off this extended *Pilotwings* tip session with a cool last minute feature we just found; two teleports in the Little States! The first is located in mini-San Francisco in a skyscraper facing the airport runway. Use your Rocket Belt to hover near the ground and you'll spot an entrance to the tower you can fly through. Zoom in, past the N64 logo, turn left and fly out the other side. Then turn around, re-enter the building, and when you exit you'll be in the middle of Manhattan! Weird! Turn back into the New York skyscraper and you'll emerge back in San Fran! And that's not all; there's another teleport in Seattle (an aircraft hangar facing the lighthouse) that takes you to the Shuttle launch pad in Florida! Happy energizing!



THE MASTER CANNONBALLER
On the second CannonBall stage, aim your competitor at the moving red, white and blue boat. Should you actually hit it, you'll only receive five points, but the actual shot takes phenomenal skill! Can you manage it?

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS

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VOCAL UMPS

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SUPER MARIO 64 — NINTENDO 64 — MEET YOSHI, GIANT MARIO, 1000 COINS, SUPER GLITCH, SLIDING SECRETS!

MEET YOSHI The green dinosaur has been found! First, collect all 120 stars (easy, huh?) and then return to the castle gardens. The grid near the fish pond will open, revealing a cannon. Blast yourself onto the castle roof and greet your old pal, who'll give you 100 lives and then leave.

GIANT MARIO Here are two totally legitimate and undoctored screenshots of Mario. But how did he get so big? We aren't telling, but that plump plumber should definitely cut down on Yoshi's cookies!

1000 COINS On the first Bowser level, confront the Koopa king, but don't throw him; just wait until he breathes fire. Collect the coins left until you reach 1000 (!), and your lives change to 'M'; meaning every time you die, you'll gain a life! Yay, infinite gaming time!

SUPER MARIO GLITCH By far the strangest secret found so far is a weird and wonderful glitch. After greeting Yoshi, collect the winged hat and head for the cannon. Shoot yourself out of the cannon and fly to the castle tower and land on the second highest roof part. With careful movement, turn and run up the tower and if you run correctly, you'll fall through the tower and land in a secret room! There are double doors which look like they lead outside, but once through them, you appear in a black void near the castle's starting chamber. Enter the doors again and you'll be back in the first room! Weird and freaky! Have you found out how to get out?

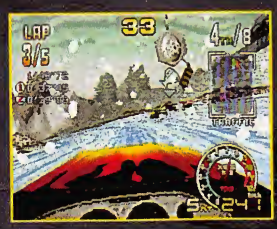
SECRET SLIDE On the first ice stage, commence your slide, and on the first left turn, head for the line of coins. You'll speed straight through into a hidden tunnel where two extra men are up for grabs. But remember this is still cheating!

SLIDING SHORTCUT Enter the red sliding level, and for a cool shortcut, jump to the left just as you come out of the tunnel and with correct timing, you'll land on the later part of the course, saving you valuable seconds. Complete the course under 21 seconds for another star!

Go for a spin. Or burn up the road.

There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who wear pink. And those who see red. If you're in the second category, you know other racing games just aren't up to speed. So hit the Burning Road.

Four kick ass vehicles scream over ***three savage tracks. Wipe-out weather conditions*** rock your world. Choice of ***automatic or manual transmission*** puts you in control–while ample opportunities to ***slam or be slammed*** hurl you out of it. From there on in, your performance is not a pretty picture. Especially when you consider all the ***visible damage*** left behind. Toss ***blazing arcade quality action*** and ***4 distinct camera angles*** into the mix for the ultimate roadkill recipe. And unlike those other games where you may never know what hit you, Burning Road's ***entire replay mode*** plays the whole race start to finish–not just lap highlights.



So trash the tutu and strap on a helmet. Because with Burning Road, you're an accident waiting to happen ...but not for long.

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RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION — PLAYSTATION IMPORT — HYPER CORNERING, SPINNING POINT MODE!!

HYPER CORNER MOVE You want the craziest cornering in the whole of racing games? Well look no further! This weird move enables you to turn your car into a bend in the wrong direction (like the sequence shows) and perform a 360° skid the wrong way before you straighten out and continue. All you need to do is race to the corner, turn the wrong way and then powerslide (just as you would in a normal 360°). Instead of spinning into the wall, your car rotates around the corner instead! Weird, but very, very cool!

SPINNING POINT MODE Time to put your spinning into practice by performing in the Spinning Point Mode. At options, choose Time Trial and just before you hit start, press and hold brake and accelerate (Square and X). Keep holding these until the countdown, and then spin when directed by the Rally X car. You'll get points at the end, too!

TEKKEN 2 — PLAYSTATION IMPORT — WINNING POSES, ROGER & ALEX, KAZUYA'S SUIT, SURVIVAL COMPETITION

CHOOSE YOUR POSE After you've won a bout, press and hold Square, Circle, Cross or Triangle, and your character performs the winning pose of your choice (including Tekken 1 originals like Jacky boy).

PURPLE SUIT KAZ Obtain all the fighters, highlight Kazuya and press Start.

PLAYABLE ROGER AND ALEX To complete your collection of 25 T2 competitors, first start one player mode (preferably on one round) and battle to the third stage. Then beat your opponent with very little energy remaining (see picture), making sure the announcer says "Great!" The next stage should then be the beach, where you'll face either Roger or Alex. Complete the game and they become selectable.

SURVIVAL MODE CONTEST!!

So, you're proud of your *Tekken*-ique, are you? Well, prove it! Below are the five best Survival scores around, and we want you to beat them! We'll continue to provide updates in the coming months, so get practicing!

KING 316 WINS

BRUCE 78 WINS

BAEK 76 WINS

HEIHACHI 62 WINS

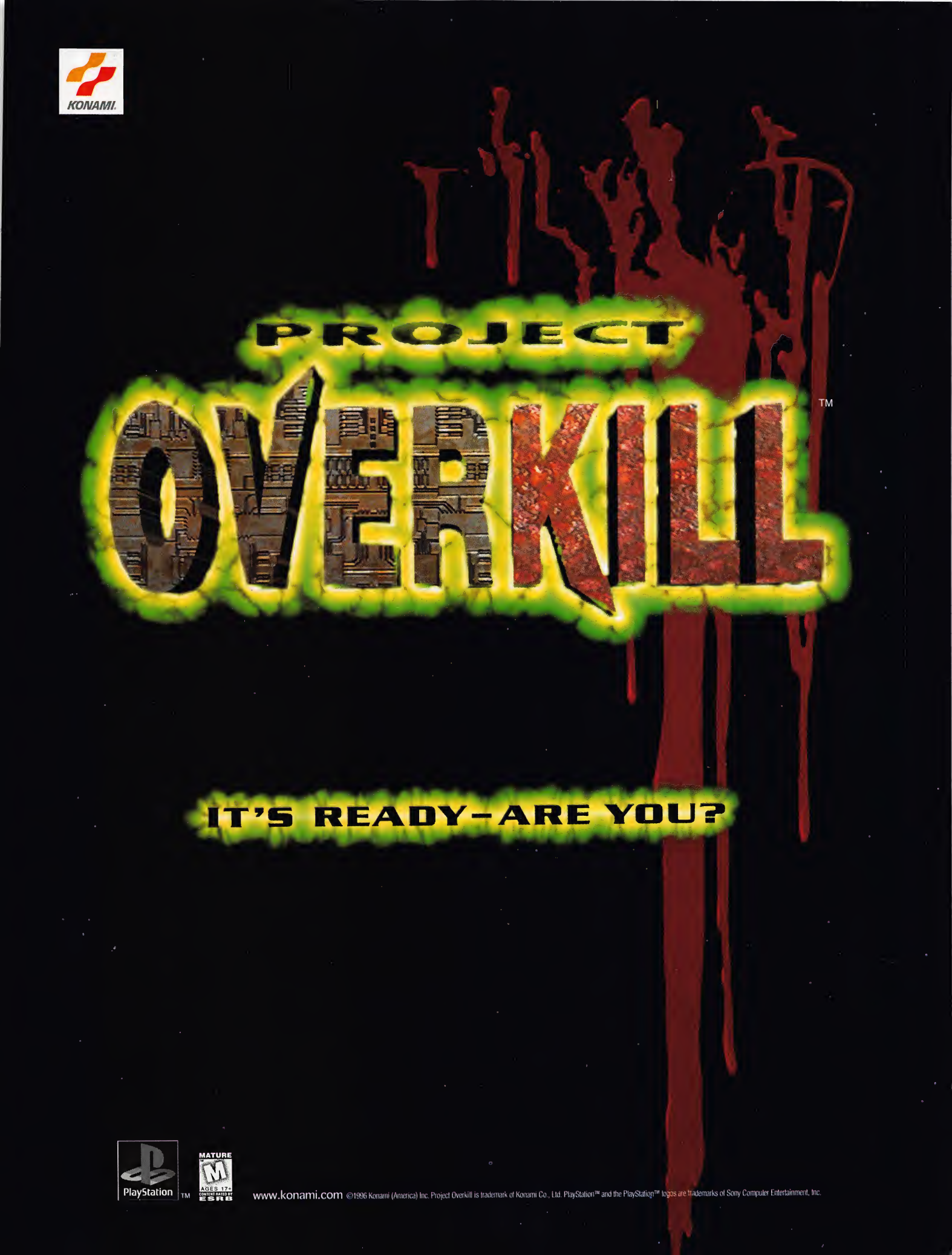
YOSHIMITSU 49 WINS

CONTEST RULES A PlayStation game of your choice goes to whoever legitimately beats the King survival record. Those with lesser scores will still be placed in the top five ranking. We accept only photographic evidence (no videos or memory cards) and to ensure you aren't using Game Shark or other codes, photos must include the PlayStation and TV with all leads visible. If we're in any doubt, we won't include it. All other competition rules apply. Send entries to the Hocus Pocus address.

VECTORMAN — SEGA GENESIS — CHEAT MENU

Go to the OPTION MENU. Then enter: A, B, B, A, DOWN, A, B, B, A. If done correctly, a screen called ORBOT'S PRIVATE OPTION SCREEN will appear. When you are finished, press START to begin play at the level of your choice.

CHRYS HORNBUCKLE
BOWDON, GA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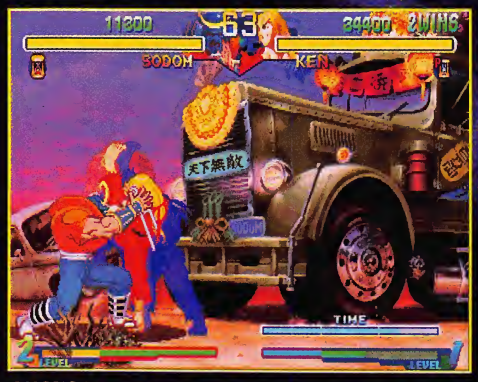
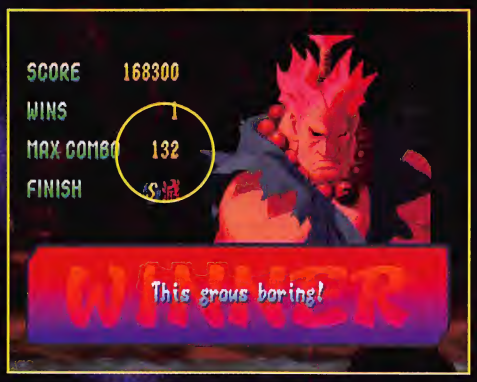
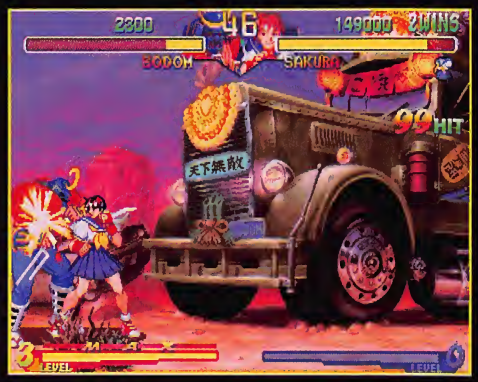
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 — ARCADE — 100+ HIT CUSTOM COMBO







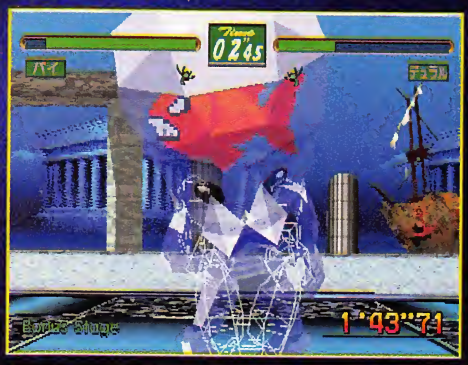
CUSTOM COMBO GLITCH Here's a weird glitch that allows any character with an overhead attack to score over 100 hits against Sodom. First, choose your fighter, and then power up (to any level). Unleash a custom combo on Sodom with an overhead. Sodom must counter at the same time with an uppercut throw with any kick (see top left picture). After the throw, the other character will still remain powered up in Custom Combo mode, but with unlimited combo time (and no shadows). Now wade in and smack Sodom to heck and back, and with skill you'll float him for ultra damage!

T.Z.W. & T.J.

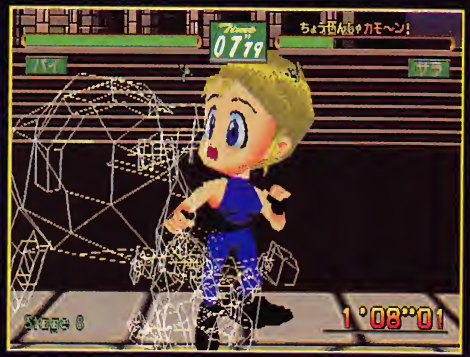
JUMPING FLASH 2 — SONY PLAYSTATION/IMPORT — SPECIAL SUPER MODE

SIX STAGE JUMP MODE Once you've completed *Jumping Flash 2* once, you'll receive two extra sets of levels to play; the Super mode and the Extra mode. You should already know about the Extra levels (the AI drone is a teddy bear!), but did you know about the special Super jump in super mode? All you have to do is jump upwards and then keep hitting jump at optimum height; and Robbit continues leaping upwards for a whopping six times! This means you should have no problem completing any level with these super Robbit jumping boots!

VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS — SEGA SATURN/IMPORT — GOLDFISH HEAD DURAL, WIRE FRAME MODE, JAVA TEA POSES



A TRIPLE HELPING OF WEIRDNESS!
For rendered CG endings for each character, beat the game on Hard with any character, but do not choose the no damage option. For the fishbowl Dural, play on the hardest level (with no damage set on or off). When you reach her, watch the fish grimace when she takes a hit! For Wireframe mode, hold down the left and right shift buttons when choosing your character (after you've beaten the game on the hardest level) and you'll be facing a huge SD foe with no slowdown whatsoever! Finally, Jacky and Shun Di have special 'Java Tea' poses. Play as either character and win the match with a Time Over, and you'll produce a can of this fine beverage!



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GAME SHARK CODES

SONY PLAYSTATION

ALIEN TRILOGY
8008F33E 0029 - HAVE SHOTGUN
8008F34A 0029 - HAVE FLAME THROWER
8008F342 0029 - HAVE PULSE RIFLE
8008F346 0029 - HAVE SMARTGUN
8009A04A 03E7 - INFINITE SHOTGUN SHELLS
8009A052 03E7 - INFINITE FLAME FUEL
8009A04C 03E7 - INFINITE PULSE AMMO
8009A054 03E7 - INFINITE SMARTGUN AMMO
8009A058 0014 - INFINITE CHARGES
8009A05C 0014 - INFINITE SHOULDER LIGHTS
8009A05A 0014 - INFINITE BATTERIES
8009A046 0014 - INFINITE 9MM BULLETS
8009A044 0014 - INFINITE ACID BOOTS
8009A042 0014 - INFINITE BODY ARMOR
8009A040 0064 - INFINITE HEALTH
8009A060 0014 - INFINITE NIGHT VISION
8009A024 0001 - RAPID FIRE
8009A050 03E7 - INFINITE PULSE GRENADE
8009A03C 03E7 - HAVE AUTOMAPPER

COLLEGE SLAM
8006551C 03E7 - TEAM 1 SCORES 999
80065520 0000 - TEAM 2 NEVER SCORES
80078208 002F - P1 INFINITE BOOST
80078528 002F - P2 INFINITE BOOST
800654CC 0002 - INFINITE TIME DURING THE HALF (SWITCH OFF TO END THE HALF)
800654B8 0011 - INFINITE SHOT CLOCKS

CRITICOM
80059C78 0320 - INFINITE ENERGY P2
80059C58 0320 - INFINITE ENERGY P1

CYBERSLED
8014A648 0005 - INFINITE MISSILES
8014A662 1000 - INFINITE SHIELD

D
80053AE0 BEDE - INFINITE TIME
800718E4 0303 - INFINITE MIRROR HINTS

DESCENT
800D10A2 0063 - INFINITE LASER
800D10A6 0063 - INFINITE ENERGY
800D10BA 0007 - INFINITE CONCUSSION MISSILES
800D10BC 0009 - INFINITE HOMING MISSILES
800D10BE 0009 - INFINITE PROXIMITY MISSILES
800D10C0 0014 - INFINITE SMART MISSILES
800D10C2 0014 - INFINITE MEGA MISSILES
800D10B2 9684 - INFINITE VULCAN AMMO

GUNSHIP
800A429A 0014 - INFINITE INNER STORES
800A429C 0014 - INFINITE OUTER STORES
800A429E 0014 - INFINITE WING TIP STORES

HARDBALL 5
800E593C 0010 - P2 SCORE 0, P1 SCORE 16

JUPITER STRIKE
800BB818 0064 - INFINITE SHIELD
800BB950 0064 - LASER ALWAYS COOL
800C38A4 0003 - INFINITE LIVES

KILEAK-THE DNA IMPERATIVE
800B6294 03CE - INFINITE ENERGY
800B62C8 01EF - INFINITE WALES AMMO
800B62C8 03E8 - INFINITE SHIELD
800B62E0 0003 - INFINITE EROSION AMMO
800B62D4 0058 - INFINITE ZAX AMMO
800B62D0 000A - INFINITE IRITRO CRION AMMO
800B62E4 03E7 - INFINITE VEDA AMMO
800B62A4 0001 - HAVE LASER GUN
800B62B0 0001 - HAVE FLAMER
800B62AE 0001 - HAVE ZAX GUN
800B62A8 0001 - HAVE IRITRO CRION
800B62B4 0001 - HAVE GAIA WEAPON
800B62BE 0001 - HAVE BEDA BLASTER
800B62B8 0001 - HAVE EROSION GUN

NBA LIVE '96
8001A49E 0000 - P2 TEAM ALWAYS SCORE 0
800E0400 296B - STOPS CLOCK
800E34D4 04DB - NO SHOT CLOCKS
8001A55A 0064 - P1 TEAM ALWAYS SCORE 100

NHL FACEOFF
800E780C 0000 - P2 TEAM ALWAYS SCORE 0

PANZER GENERAL
800EDB84 03E7 - INFINITE PRESTIGE P1
80089A90 0A00 - INFINITE TURNS REMAINING

PRIMAL RAGE
8009A1EC 0063 - UNLIMITED TIME
8009A804 0000 - INFINITE HEALTH P1
800A7E7E 0000 - INFINITE HEALTH P2

SKELETON WARRIORS
801DB774 000A - INFINITE CRYSTALS
801DB760 0064 - INFINITE ENERGY
801DB768 000A - INFINITE LIVES
801DB752 0001 - INVINCIBILITY

SLAM 'N' JAM '96
800EB520 0064 - P1 TEAM ALWAYS 100
800EB704 0000 - P2 TEAM ALWAYS 0

SPACE GRIFFON
801E0032 0190 - INFINITE ROCKET LAUNCHER
801E0058 1F40 - INFINITE ENERGY ON CHARACTER SELECT SCREEN

THEME PARK
801AF850 FFFF - INFINITE MONEY

VR SOCCER
8011B974 0064 - P1 TEAM ALWAYS SCORE 100
8011B978 0000 - P2 TEAM ALWAYS SCORE 0

WWF: THE ARCADE GAME
D00370BA 0004 - MASTER CODE
8006E860 00A7 - INFINITE ENERGY P1
8006E868 00A7 - INFINITE ENERGY P2
8006E866 0010 - INFINITE COMBO METER P1
8006E86E 0010 - INFINITE COMBO METER P2

SEGA SATURN

BASES LOADED
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
1600DEBC 0000 - P2 ALWAYS SCORE 0

CENTER RING BOXING
F6000924 C305 - MASTER CODE
1605C320 00A9 - UNLIMITED TIME
1605BC92 0000 - P2 BECOMES A "CHICKEN"

D
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
1601F80A 1A60 - UNLIMITED MIRROR HINTS

GOLDEN AXE-THE DUEL
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
16078A5C 0080 - INFINITE ENERGY P1

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '96
F60290D0 C305 - MASTER CODE
1603EC54 0000 - P2 ALWAYS SCORE 0

PANZER DRAGOON II
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
160730AC 00B4 - INFINITE BERSERK METER
1607335C 0100 - 3 WAY SHOT
1607335C 0200 - 5 WAY SHOT
1607335C 0500 - HOMING SHOT
1607335C 0600 - GRAVITON SHOT
160730A8 0080 - INFINITE ENERGY
160730EC 0064 - 100% KILLS
1607E766 1194 - STOP BOSS TIMER

SKELETON WARRIORS
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
1607EBCA 0084 - INFINITE STARSWORDS
1607EBBE 0064 - INFINITE ENERGY

SLAM 'N' JAM '96
F6000924 C305 - MASTER CODE
1025B674 0064 - P1 TEAM ALWAYS 100 PTS
1025B878 0000 - P2 TEAM ALWAYS 0 PTS

VIRTUA COP
F6003DEE C305 - MASTER CODE
16057952 0505 - INFINITE HEALTH P1
16057912 0505 - INFINITE HEALTH P2
1606A3E8 0006 - INFINITE BULLETS P1
1606A398 0006 - INFINITE BULLETS P2
1606A3AE 5DAC - SELECT MACHINE GUN P1
1606A3FE 5DAC - SELECT MACHINE GUN P2

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
160E0032 0782 - INFINITE TIME
160E0068 004F - OUT OF RING FIGHTING
160621B8 00A0 - INFINITE ENERGY P1
160E007A 0024 - LOW GRAVITY
160E007C 0000 - MEGA KICK
160E0002 0A0A - PLAY BONUS LEVEL 10
160E0038 0010 - PLAY UNDER WATER
160E007A 0000 - NO GRAVITY
160E007A FFFF - ULTRA GRAVITY
360E000E 0000 - PLAY AS LAU P1

WING ARMS
F6000914 C305 - MASTER CODE
16065932 0064 - INFINITE MISSILES
16065926 0004 - RAPID MISSILE FIRE
16065936 0035 - INFINITE ARMOR
160654DC 0009 - INFINITE CREDITS

BRYAN BLACK
CHRIS HUNTER
brianj@htc.net
c-nos@tir.com

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and nothing but the NFL.

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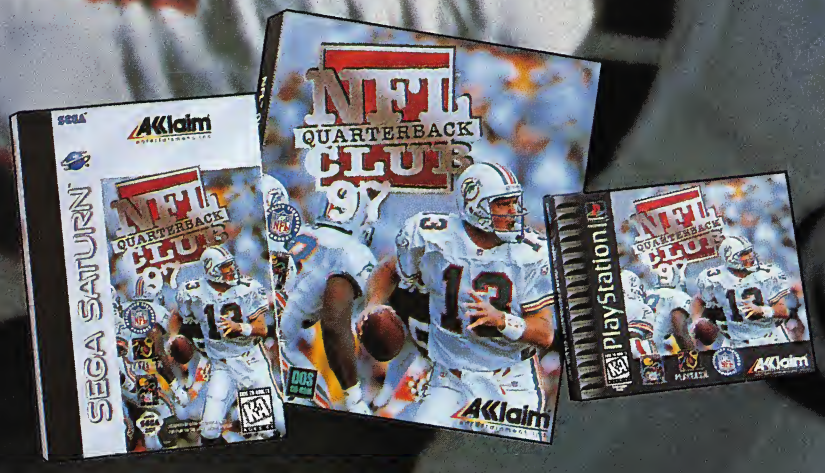
–Game Players, June 1996



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NINTENDO 64 THEATER

It's around this time that most American gamers rush home to plug in and sit mesmerized around Nintendo's 64-bit monster console. Has the wait been worth it? Well, if the first two releases are anything to go by, then the answer is a resounding YES!! The initial couple of Japanese titles are arguably the finest platform and flight games EVER; to such an extent that I'm still playing and replaying both titles months after the Japanese launch. With this in mind, I thought it was about time to present a couple of follow-up guides to *Super Mario 64* and *Pilotwings 64* with a whole host of interesting hints, tips and features you might not have discovered yet. So what are we waiting for? Let's plunge right in with more platform antics from Brooklyn's finest plumber; the Italian Stallion himself... Mario!!

So you've bought *Super Mario 64*, have you? Smart move, as you're playing the most advanced gaming masterpiece ever created! You just won't believe how this plays, looks and keeps you compelled to play for days at a time. Prepare to lose vast amounts of your social life for the next few months when sitting down to an extended play session of this beauty! From the tweakable Mario head to the super-smooth quality of the animation; the lack of glitching textures, the awesome water effects and the total absence of pixelization; you'll immediately discover why Nintendo is back in town with a vengeance!

To begin with, Mario's actual movements around the 3D landscapes take a little time to get used to; simply because nothing so revolutionary has been seen in a game before! Initially, you'll hold the joypad wrong (the right way is to clutch the middle fin with your left hand), overcompensate on the 3D stick (causing the plumber to rush off in all directions) and generally spend more time with your jaw on the floor than getting on with the multitude of tasks at hand. The analog nature of the 3D-stick in the center of the Nintendo 64 pad is crucial to this new freedom of movement as it allows you numerous speed gradients (from the tip-toe to the full-tilt sprint) that just weren't possible with a digital D-pad.

Initially, take your time adjusting to the feel of the 3D stick before using the dif-

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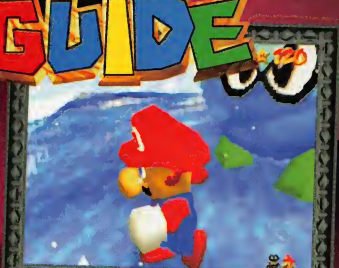
SUPER STRATEGY GUIDE

ferent walking motions in your actual play. The more complex maneuvers are covered over the page, but even the various Mario wanderings are more suited to different events than others. For example, employ the tip-toe when trying not to wake the dozing Megasmilaxes, or when you've got a really narrow ledge to walk over that's too long to jump. The walk is best reserved for new areas that you might be unsure of, while the run enables Mario to scoot around levels in record time (watch for his stopping distance, though!)

You'll also be astounded by the camera angles you can use throughout the game. Essentially there are three different views, but any of these can be viewed through the Mario-cam or the Lakitu-cam. I personally favor the Lakitu-cam viewpoints, simply because Mario is further away from the camera and thus more of the level can be seen. I use the far view extensively, pausing to use the mid-view in confined spaces and the 'look around' option when stum-



PLUNGE INTO 64-BIT REALITY!

bling into a new zone for the first time. Master the views and your star quests (plus general gaming) become all the more fun!

HOW CAN THIS GAME BE SO GOOD?

UPDATE

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - NINTENDO

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM

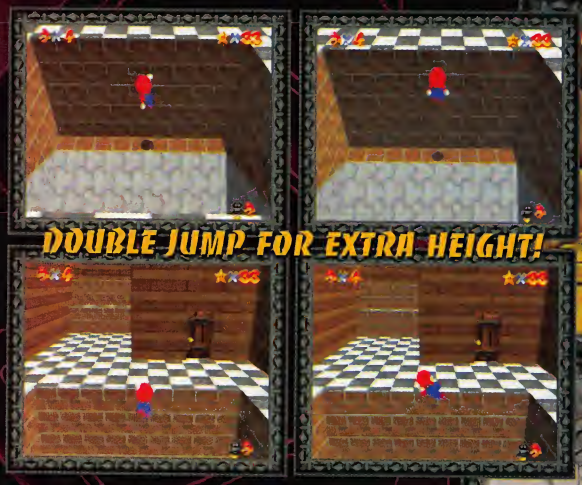
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

CHIEF HAMBLETON
MARIO AND PILOTWINGS;
DOUBLE 64-BIT JOY!!

Once you've grasped the general concepts of movement, try referring to the multitude of extra special jumps and leaps that Mario can perform. Below is a list of the coolest moves Mario has, and when the plump plumber can actually use them effectively in his missions to save the Princess. First, try to perfect one of the easier techniques; the three-tier jump. Hitting jump just as you land (while keeping forwards pressed) results in a higher second jump, and a third leap is higher still, and comes complete with a somersault. The second jump of the three is most useful as it allows Mario to grab ledges that are often too high to grasp on the first jump, while the third leap is mainly used to show off, or else as an alternative to the Yahoo leap.

Talking of the Yahoo leap, the extra length afforded by this move proves invaluable to the expert player, and this technique must be perfected at the earliest opportunity; it's the most valuable leap in the game! Practice your timing (hit the Z button a fraction before you jump - failure results in a rather embarrassing butt-bounce!) and you'll be using this technique every time; from covering land quicker than running to leaping over bottomless pits with ease! After the Yahoo leap comes the climbing handstand; the only way to launch yourself from a tree or a pole and cover that extra distance you normally couldn't manage. Remember to point Mario's head in a direction of your intended landing or you'll suffer a dangerous plummet!

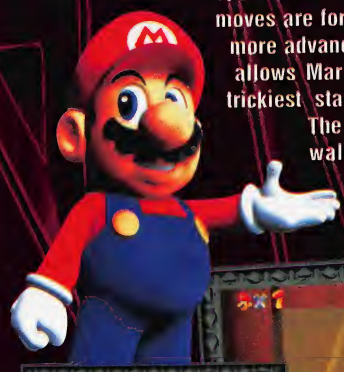
Mario's crawl and crouch aren't that useful here (although try crawling up stairs for some



SUPER STRATEGY GUIDE

weird animation!), but the crouch is the key to the excellent somersault - the key to reaching platforms in a much easier manner than by triple jumping. And speaking of somersaults, another hyper-cool move of Mario's is his other somersault, which occurs when you quickly change direction and jump during a sprint. Mario scoots to a halt and flips back the way he came. Fancy? Yep! Useful? Extremely, especially on ice worlds where the danger of skidding into the abyss is all too common, and this can be avoided just prior to the fall. Try seeing how close to the edge you can run before flipping backwards!

Attacking the beasts that lurk in the differing worlds can also be honed to perfection. Try timing your three attack string and there'll be less chance of those critters hitting you. Also remember the crouching boot (crouch then attack); not very useful but fun to watch! Turn the crouching boot into a butt-slide and you'll soon be approaching the sliding runs with an expert start! Another place to gain time (and look really cool) is in water levels, where a leaping dive into a pool of crystal blue water looks so much better than a butt splash!



The final two moves are for the more advanced players, and the first allows Mario to reach some of the trickiest stars in the entire game. The technique known as the wall bounce sees Mario leap onto one wall, then off it to another.

USE YOUR HANDS TO CLIMB AND CARRY!

PUNCH, KICK AND HIP DROP FOES!

WATCH MARIO SHIVER IN THE COLD!

BACK FLIP ONTO TRICKY LEDGES!

SIDE FLIP OUT OF DANGER!

NAP TIME FOR MARIO!

Precision timing is required here, and for even more height, try a triple jump beforehand. Lastly, when you're speeding downwards to a nasty landing, execute the butt-bounce just before you hit the ground. Mario will spin and land buttocks first, but with no damage from the fall at all. Happy jumping, gamers!

So... once you and the plumber have got yourselves acquainted, you'll want to be venturing through the fifteen monster worlds of this expansive title. With this in mind, I've chosen two of the trickier levels and given you precise instructions in obtaining all seven stars from each of them. Prepare for swimming and diving into active volcanoes as we delve into 64-bit Mario lands...

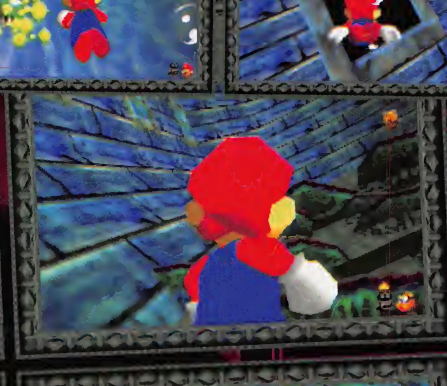
GUIDE TO COURSE 3

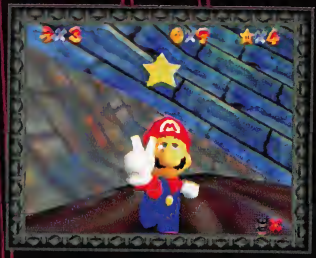
To conclude GameFan's Super Mario 64 coverage, I thought I'd mosey on down to one of the more spectacular levels and offer complete guidance on the collection of all the stars. Should you require even more in-depth coverage of the game, try an issue of MegaFan, but for the moment let's don a oversized crimson hat, struggle into a pair of unfashionable blue pantaloons and take on Bowser's minions once and for all!

World three is the first water world, with a wealth of spectacular features and some rather fiendish puzzles to figure out. For the first star, Mario must dive into the deep, negotiate those killer clams (and perhaps pick up a green Koopa shell for greater swimming potential) and finally plunge into the dark recess of the giant sunken galleon area. Hey, what's that huge bobbing head over there? Why, it's a 50-foot Eel with massive chompers, and he looks mighty hungry! Watch your air supply (collect coins for more oxygen) and swim onward to investigate...

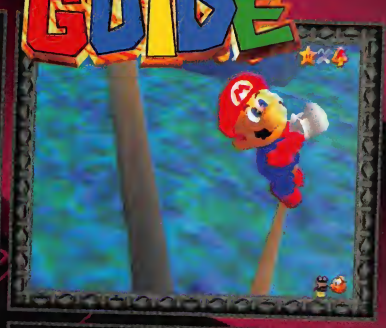
This sea serpent with an attitude looks really mean, and sure enough, when you venture too close he nips you badly. Swim to some coins fast (preferably the ring of coins near the cave entrance) and collect the extra-man mushroom. Continue and come up for air in the cave mouth before venturing back. By now the serpent should be swimming freely, and this is the chance you've been waiting for! Quickly head for the galleon's window (where ol' slimy chops was hiding) and swim right in. Once inside, head for the air pocket, and then solve the casket puzzle (very very simple!). The ship will start to rise, so begin swimming and find your footing on a slippery platform. Head for the item box and... Kaboom!! The first star is yours!

Re-enter again, this time chattering to the pink Mezzo Bomb located on a platform to the right of the arena (as you enter), before returning to the cannon itself, which whirrs into life near to the beach where you began this level. Fire away so Mario grabs the left hand spike, but





WATCH YOUR STEP ON THE SLIPPERY PLANKS!



remember to aim higher than the spike itself or you'll hit it at speed and fall for an impromptu bath. Shimmy to the top of the spike before handstanding and leaping onto the ledge. That's an easy second star for you! Remember that those in need of extra lives should fire Mario towards the middle spike, as there's an extra man located at the top.

Now Mario must search for the next star, which starts with a swim to the secret cave on one of the walls where the galleon lay. Swim like you mean it, and race to the far end of the cavern, avoiding the falling rock structures. With a little exploration, you'll discover roving bands of Goombas; butt bounce 'em for extra stars. Also look for a ring of gold coins here in the second portion of the cave, and that handy blue coin block located to the right of the

FIRE MARIO FROM THE CANNON TO REACH A STAR!

entrance. However, at the back of the cave you'll find another four chests, and once you've opened them (without being electrocuted in the process) they reveal their secret... another golden star! Joy!

The next star is a little more tricky, as you've got to harass that eel once again. Swim to his tunnel (located further up from the cave) and coax him out (preferably without getting hit). He'll gnash his choppers wildly and swim out for an inspection of his domain. While he's out of his cocoon, swim for the star on his tail (this is one tricky dash!) for that fourth star!

Two more stars are initially up for grabs here; the eight red coins need collecting (think; clams and a galleon with the star appearing on the ship itself) and the hundred coin star (keep looking, and remember the blue coin switch in the cave) before you must leave this zone to continue with your quest. Come back here once the green switch palace has been activated, as this is the key to the final star.

Enter again and swim to the cave. In the cave itself, find the green item box, pick the mercury cap and stomp away in a direct route to the lake floor. As your power-up fades, jump into the rising air pockets where the final star lies and with any luck you'll hit the final star on your ascension through the bubbles. Congratulations! You've found all the stars!

GUIDE TO COURSE 7

An awesome lake of fiery lava covers this zone, and without asbestos feet (or indeed, underpants), the plumbmeister needs careful controlling to avoid a nasty burning bruise (which can result in a horrific fish-eyed death!). Although this level looks intimidating to begin with, there's some real sneaky short-cuts to make your star collection a whole lot easier!

The first star requires a small trek past the Bowser puzzle, over some more platforms to the wooden island where a huge and menacing horned cannon beast with a glare of terror and bouncing ability to match is ready to waddle into battle. Defeat him (using the technique described below) and a bridge to your first star appears... watch for the collapsing platforms and go!

The second star is gathered in exactly the same manner, except this time you've three smaller horned bombers to dispatch before a bigger one appears. The fun begins further on from the first star (on a dark red platform). Here's the tip for fighting them; corner one and punch it three times as it charges. Too late and you'll be pushed back, and too near the other critters and the whole gang overruns you! Keep hitting them and edging forwards until they scoot back into the lava. One down and three to go! Punch, kick and dodge like never before and after this, the father of all spiky cannonball dudes strides into town, and this time the fight won't be as fun-filled! Coax him to the edge of the platform, and push him off by any means necessary (either by punching him backwards, or else dodging his charge so he falls in the lava) and you'll soon have your beautiful shining second star!

DON'T TORCH MARIO'S BUTT ON THE SCORCHING LAVA!

Your third star is surprisingly easy to obtain. You may have seen the warp to the red item box (and the flying hat)? Well, ignore that, and simply turn around from your starting position. Execute a running leap ("Yahoo!!") and you'll bypass all the bother of teleportation and land on that platform. Grab the winged hat, triple jump into the air, and head for the platform near to the rolling log and black fence. Triple jump again (for extra speed), swoop over the fence and onto the platform, finishing next to the star with a butt-drop. There's another star for you without all that nasty, difficult log rolling!

The final star is located in the Bowser puzzle. Collect all eight coins (easy, easy, EASY!!) and grab it. While you're at it, col-

SUPER STRATEGY GUIDE

lect all the coins you can and try for the hundred coin star. Then it's time for a spot of pot-holing... right into that active volcano!

This is where the final two stars remain. First, jump the platforms and take the spiraling ledge upwards. Dodge the spouting fire hoses and the falling block, and careful with those jumps over the floating platforms (one wrong move and it's toast time!). Climb the poles, use exact jumping and before you know it, the star is yours. There's no collapsing ledges so don't worry!

The final star is a little more difficult. Trot to the yellow checkered conveyor platform and ascend to volcano central, leaping to the next conveyor and onto the pole. Handstand at the top, look for the next pole (don't worry about the revolving fire platform) and with perfect timing, you'll leap right over. Then shimmy to the top, handstand and try a small jump onto the tiny platform. Then

CAREFULLY (oh, and do I mean *carefully*!) leap onto every platform (be VERY sure of your depth!). Then... finally... the last star is yours! Hoorah, let the Mario merriment begin! The level is finally over... but the game is just beginning... Just where's that bug-eyed green dinosaur...? ***CH***

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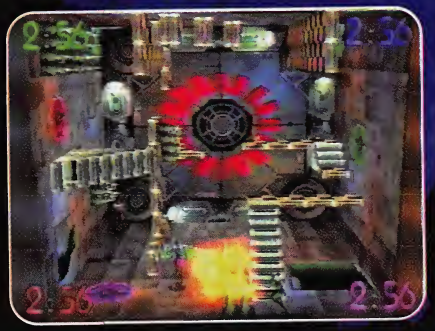

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PILOTWINGS 64

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

HANG GLIDER

Pilotwings is still fantastic. Another month may have passed, but that doesn't mean we haven't stopped playing this second Nintendo 64 classic until our brains hurt. Aside from looking like a cut-down NASA space simulation, this has to be the first console flight simulation that really captures the spirit of being hundreds of feet in the air. Oh, you've got to buy this beauty when she comes out! There's been so much excitement generated by this second N64 title that we wrestled stark staring butt-naked for the chance to write the second strategy guide, and thankfully the extra girth of myself took on the challenge of Evil Lights, and I won through after two straight takedowns. So, I've decided on a brief run through of the hardest missions, plus extra info on the bonus games, Birdman routines and a couple of interesting secrets to keep you going until you can buy it officially. Now go git to your Hang Glider! Now!

Course P: The three missions offered for the true Pilotwings expert are naturally the most difficult in the entire game, requiring the flying ace to loop, arc and catch thermals like never before! First, choose your favorite flyer (the best-suited being the diminutive frames of either Kiwi or Lark), and take to the skies of Little States for the ultimate in Hang Gliding action.

First off is the relatively easy thermal climb, and as you might imagine, you must gain height by flying through increasingly higher thermal winds whilst the great American plains stretch out before you. Keep turning your glider once you've hit a thermal, and look for another right away for the quickest and easiest results. Once you've risen to around 550 feet, the thermals disappear, leaving you high as a kite and ready to make a graceful descent. Just not too fast, huh?

All Artwork © Nintendo/Paradigm 1996

Mini Monument Valley is the setting for the second task, in which you must fly through eight hoops in any order before landing in LA. Speed is the key here, as you must zoom through those hoops without constantly hitting thermals. You need hit only one, and don't try flying down the dam river either; go for the hoops floating in the air to the right. The main way to score those all important extra points is to memorize a route and stick to it, and not to lose too much height; or you'll be floundering just short of that elusive marker After you've beaten the hoops, try that low-flying approach (at around 50 kmh) you've been honing to perfection.

THIS IS REAL TOUGH, DUDE!

The final task is the most fun, as you've got to photograph three different objects. The first is the metal crimson monster of the black lagoon (AKA The Squealing Pig Beast), the second a circling cruise liner, and the third is the shuttle just prior to launch. Follow the same advice as for earlier photography missions and you should have no problem, but for those with difficulty in taking flying photography, choose the exterior viewpoint and swoop in fast and low (making sure there's a nearby thermal to catch). After memorizing the default pictures, attempt to replicate them and remember; you've got two chances here for each scene. The monster and cruise liner are no problem, but that shuttle... phew, you're gonna have to be some sort of flying god to swoop in with all that crosswind! After the final pic, approach the landing with care, as there's many buildings to snag your delicate wings on. Be careful out there!

UPDATE

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - PARADIGM

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

CHIEF HAMBLETON

GYROCOPTER

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

Course P: The dreaded Gyrocopter represents the most difficult set of courses this time around, but with the correct choice of pilot (either of the heavyweights known as Hawk and Hooter/Robin) this arduous task becomes somewhat easier. First up is the big teeth-grinder; how about flying in an arctic gale through minute spinning hoops? Yeah, afraid so! Now the trick here is to switch to the external view and go for every single hoop you can. Don't even think about going for those white (and yellow) extra hoops until you've mastered the blue hoop course. And just when you thought it couldn't get any worse... comes the landing! Land a flimsy copter in a force nine gale? Yeah I'd be up for that... just don't expect me to hit the runway! As always, practice and a cool head is a bonus (along with exact precision timing and the ability to control weather).

The next mission is a whole other ball game... literally. Arm up and buzz into the killing zone; you've got a whole load of target balls to blow away! Line up your shots and don't waste a single missile, and you'll be fine. Also try for as few fly-bys as possible. And a perfect landing would help. The same advice comes in useful on the last course where that giant Mecha Hawk (the robot encountered in course B) is causing trouble again. Worry a group of whales would you, you metal beast? Well take some heavy-duty missiles to the mustache! The problem here is the smaller moving target, as Mecha Hawk is half-submerged, and also has the annoying habit of throwing ice chunks at you (swerve to avoid them rather than waste your missiles) and swimming under the water. Hit him five times and return to base, and for extra points, try hitting him a second time just after he screams on the first hit. Then return to base, soldier!

ROCKET BELT

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

Course P: Oh yeah! My favorite flying machine! Take to the Crescent Island for the trickiest maneuvers you've ever seen; especially in the first task, which has you boosting through an actual tunnel complex! Now this is what seat-of-the-pants gaming should be all about! One wrong move here and it's pin-ball time! Use the large yellow boosters intermittently to jet through the structure (of course, you've got to select Goose or Ibis for best results), and if you see yourself jetting into a wall, hit the blue hover boosts real quick to avoid a nasty, squishy death! Watch for the crosswind in the great chamber, and change angles to descend into the waterfall cavern. Then switch back, jet away and change again for the second descent. Finally, jet through the opening tunnel to the finish hoop and safety!

Next up is the good ol' ball bouncing test, and again you've got the huge green ball to maneuver into the green portal. This is as easy as it sounds, providing you chip the ball upwards slightly and keep it from actually hitting the ground at all. Failure to do so may result in the ball becoming wedged in the jagged rock stream sections, causing hideous gnashing of teeth. Better keep it airborne then, hadn't you?

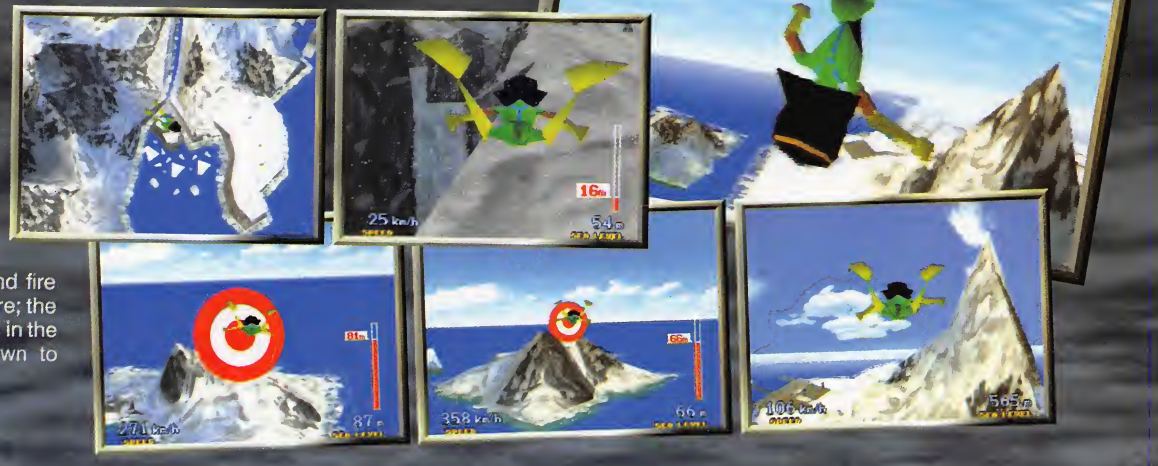
Lastly there's the familiar target landing, but now with an important difference; there's a slight wind and the targets are mighty small; requiring precision booster work to avoid a needless (and rather embarrassing) plummet. Keep your finger near that blue hover boost button and try for the quickest time possible. Oh, and don't lose your way either! Try not to change views (as you don't really need to) and you'll have gold here in no time at all!

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

CANNONBALL

Not content with delivering an awesome flying experience, the wizards at Paradigm have spent just that little extra time creating three hyper-cool bonus offerings. First up is the Cannonball, where hapless competitors are stuffed gleefully into a cannon and then fired into the stratosphere! All three events require exactly the same tactics, though, but the later the task, the more difficult the position of the target which you must hit. Activate the Cannonball by scoring Silver or Gold in Course A categories.

Fire your player (ideally Hooter or Hawk) at the target, and steer them slightly in the air. Hit the middle and it's 25 points. Fail, and you'll find yourself floundering head-first in a tree! Other tips are to fire on maximum power and use the alternate 'yellow sight' view. Other than that, you're on your own. One final point though; you must over-aim your character at least once, and fire him or her off into the stratosphere; the flailing character spends minutes in the air before coming crashing down to earth with a messy thud!



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ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

SKY DIVING

Another bonus game (activated after you score Silver or Gold medals in all course B categories) that's a whole lotta fun to play is the Sky-Diving. Again, I offer the same advice on all of the three levels; don't panic and stay with your team. As you must provide spectators with five aerial displays each time, I'd suggest you learn the pattern of the four falling sky divers and fit in the best you can, with pin-point reactions in order to halt yourself from a freefall disaster that could result in a rather messy death. Do this by a combination of memory (remember those five different patterns), speed (follow the pack immediately and don't fly beneath them) and precision (light taps when you've hit the formation). Once you've plummeted through the clouds, freefall to about 200 feet, then point your head to the heavens and release that 'chute. You should gracefully float to earth, and with a little bit of competence, a perfect landing can be acquired. Remember to pull up if you're veering off-course, and extra points are up for grabs to those executing a gentle landing. I must also mention the final Sky-Diving level: Have you seen Mount Eversnow from that angle before? Simply breathtaking!

RIP THE CORD, BUDDY!

A FAST FREEFALL THROUGH FIVE FORMATIONS!

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

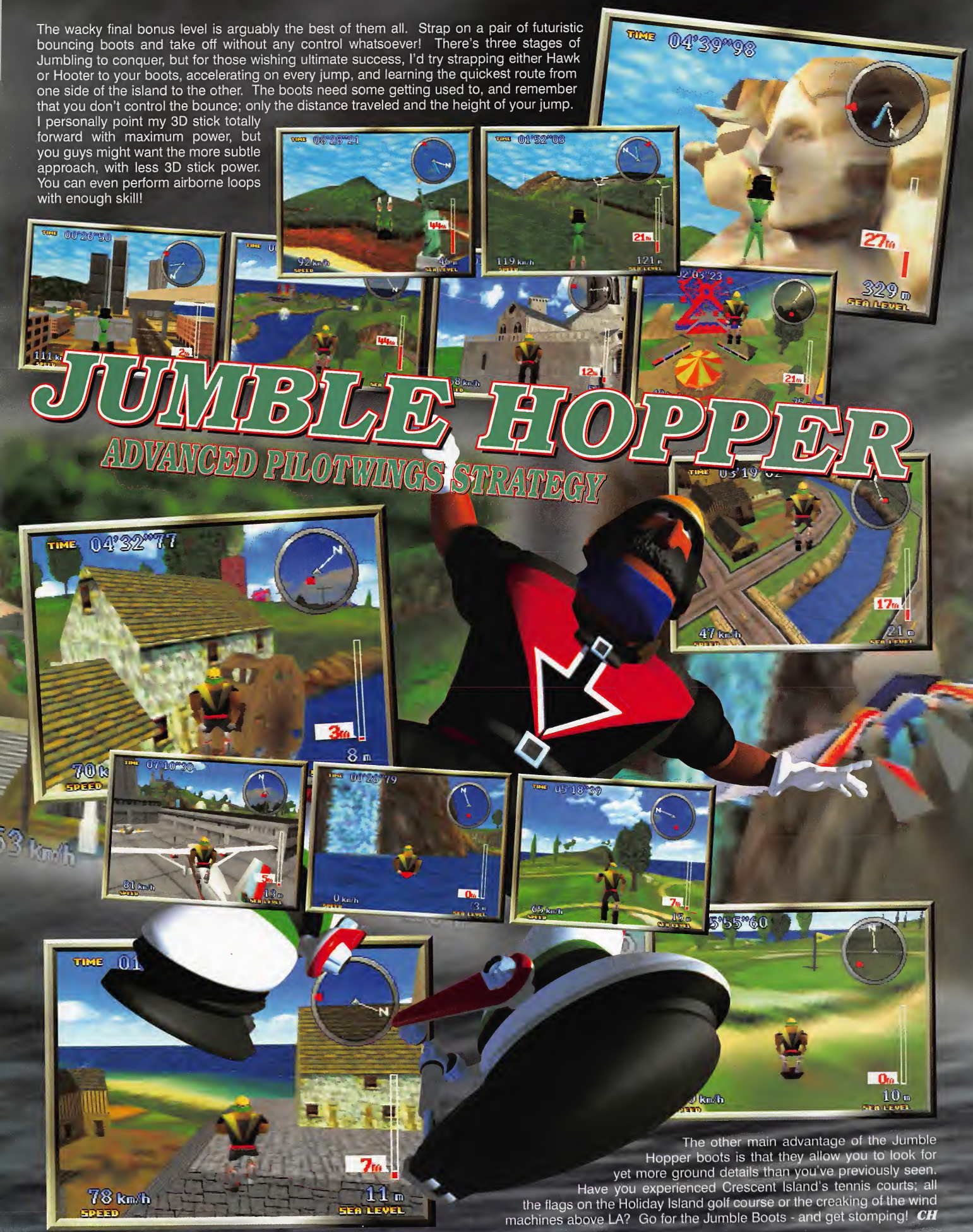
Want to know where all the secret stars are on all four islands? Well look no further, as one of the ways to acquire Icarus wings is finally revealed. The Holiday Island star is easy to spot, nestling in a natural arch near the golf course, but the other three stars are slightly more difficult to obtain. The Crescent Island star is in a secret beach cove just the other side of the main bay and next to the airport. Fly around the coast until you spot the lighthouse and comb the hidden beach until you spot the cove. Then carefully move your craft (ideally the Rocket Belt) until the star is flown through.

The final two stars are just as cunningly hidden. In Everfrost Island, fly until you find the mountain waterfalls that cascade down in four to five layers. Fly above the waterfall, and you'll see two tunnel entrances. The left one is blocked, but the right one leads you down a winding cave and down into a subterranean pool where the star is to be found. The final star in Little States is obtained by flying to New York and heading for Central Park (looking a little sparse area with only one tree!). And there, as if by magic, there's a glistening star! Joy! With the feathered wings, you're off for more mellow soaring than you thought possible (but how do you take pictures whilst in Birdman mode...?)! With no fuel problems, there's only one course of action you need to take: Flap away people, flap away!

JUMBLE HOPPER

ADVANCED PILOTWINGS STRATEGY

The wacky final bonus level is arguably the best of them all. Strap on a pair of futuristic bouncing boots and take off without any control whatsoever! There's three stages of Jumbling to conquer, but for those wishing ultimate success, I'd try strapping either Hawk or Hooter to your boots, accelerating on every jump, and learning the quickest route from one side of the island to the other. The boots need some getting used to, and remember that you don't control the bounce; only the distance traveled and the height of your jump. I personally point my 3D stick totally forward with maximum power, but you guys might want the more subtle approach, with less 3D stick power. You can even perform airborne loops with enough skill!



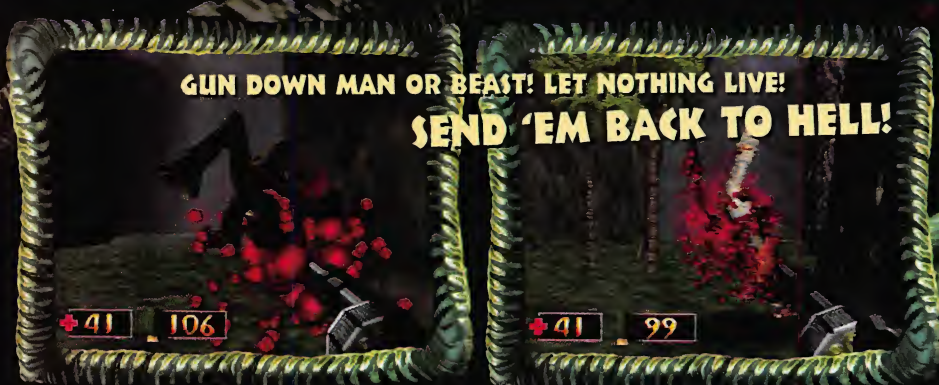
The other main advantage of the Jumble Hopper boots is that they allow you to look for yet more ground details than you've previously seen. Have you experienced Crescent Island's tennis courts; all the flags on the Holiday Island golf course or the creaking of the wind machines above LA? Go for the Jumble Boots - and get stomping! ***CH***

AFTER PLUGGING IN MY 60%-COMPLETE PREVIEW COPY OF TUROK, IT TOOK ME ALL OF FIVE SECONDS TO REALIZE I WAS PLAYING A TRULY AWESOME PIECE OF SOFTWARE, AND AFTER HALF AN HOUR OF CONSTANT CARNAGE, ALL MY NAGGING DOUBTS I HAD ABOUT NINTENDO'S SECOND WAVE OF 64-BIT SOFTWARE NOT MATCHING UP TO THE DIZZY HEIGHTS OF MARIO AND PILOTWINGS WERE BLASTED COMPLETELY FROM MY HEAD. I WAS SIMPLY GOBSMACKED BY THE POWER OF NINTENDO'S WONDER CONSOLE... AGAIN!!

JUST AS SOON AS YOU'VE CHECKED OUT YOUR KEYS, YOU'RE IMMEDIATELY THROWN INTO AN AMAZINGLY DETAILED 3D ENVIRONMENT. THE GAME LOADS INSTANTLY (STILL HARD TO IMAGINE WHEN THE GRAPHICS LOOK THIS GOOD), AND THEN YOU'RE READY TO WANDER INTO THE UNDERGROWTH... BUT NOT BEFORE YOU GET TO GRIPS WITH THE CONTROL SYSTEM. YOUR TURNING AND LOOKING UP AND DOWN IS CONTROLLED BY THE 3D-STICK, WHILE JUMPING IS ACHIEVED BY HITTING EITHER OF THE TWO SHOULDER BUTTONS. CYCLE THROUGH YOUR ARSENAL OF DEADLY KILLING WEAPONS WITH A OR B, FIRE USING Z, AND STRAFE LEFT AND RIGHT WITH C. FINALLY, FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS OCCURS BY HITTING THE C BUTTONS AS WELL, AND THERE'S NO RUN.

SO, I SPENT A COUPLE OF MINUTES GETTING USED TO THE CONTROLS AND THEN I WAS OFF... STALKING THROUGH THE MISTY JUNGLES LIKE A POSSESSED AND BLOOD-THIRSTY HUNTER, READY TO CARVE UP SOME DINOSAUR HIDE REAL QUICK! I SOON DISCOVERED THAT THIS WAS A SUPER-SMOOTH, 30 FPS GAMING ENVIRONMENT WITH SOME TRULY OUTSTANDING SOUND SAMPLES. THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING STEREO SOUND HAD ME RUNNING FOR COVER AT THE SOUND OF (EXTREMELY LOUD) GUN SHOTS, GROWLS, SHRIEKS AND SOFT FOOT-FALLS AS I EXPERIENCED SOME OF THE MOST CRISP, CLEAR AND DOWNRIGHT REALISTIC WEAPON NOISES EVER. ALL THE SOUNDS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A STORMING SOUNDTRACK (CD QUALITY OF COURSE) THAT ADDS AN AIR OF TENSION, DESPITE SOME RATHER CHEESY MIAMI VICE STYLE TOM-TOM BREAKS.

BEFORE I CONTINUED WITH MY KILLING SPREE, I CYCLED THROUGH THE THIRTEEN WEAPONS ON OFFER. A GLAZED EXPRESSION TOOK OVER MY VISAGE AS I LOADED UP AN AK-47, MINI-GUN (LOOKING JUST LIKE JESSY'S IN PREDATOR), LASER RIFLE,



GRENADE LAUNCHER AND FINALLY THE THREE EXPERIMENTAL PIECES OF HEAVY DUTY ORDINANCE WHICH WERE GREETED BY GASPS OF AMAZED DELIGHT BY THE ASSEMBLED GAMEFAN CREW. FIRST UP IS A TRI-BARRELED MISSILE LAUNCHER (OH YEAH!!), NEXT IS A CYAN ROTATING LASER CUTTER THAT FIRES A WALL OF ENERGY AND SPLITS FOES APART. BUT THE FINAL WEAPON... IT'S THE MOST SPECTACULAR GUN EVER SEEN IN A 3D DOOM-STYLE GAME (AND THAT INCLUDES QUAKE!). AFTER THE WHINE OF MECHANICAL PARTS, A HUGE METALLIC CANNON APPEARS, AND RUMBLES WITH A POWER BUILD-UP BEFORE SPEWING FORTH A FANTASTIC BALL OF LIGHT-SOURCED ENERGY (LIKE A STAR TREK TNG PHOTON TORPEDO). THIS FLOATS FORWARD AND THEN ANNIHILATES IN WAVES OF NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION! YEEHAARR!!!

AS I WAS RECOVERING FROM THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF MY WEAPONRY, A COUPLE OF ENEMIES WANDERED INTO VIEW AND WERE DEALT WITH IN AN APPROPRIATE AND BLOODY MANNER. THE MONSTERS FEATURED INCLUDE SPEARMEN, SOLDIERS, RAPTORS, MONKEY-LIKE DINOSAURS, BIO-MECHANICAL MUTANTS AND THE NOW-INFAMOUS LUMBERING GORILLA-LIZARD (WHICH NOW LOOKS EVEN MEANER AND FIRES GREAT GOUTS OF FIERY DEATH AT YOU). ALSO UP FOR INSPECTION WAS AN EXCELLENT ROBOT BOSS (WHICH MOVED TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF CLANKING METAL PISTONS). ALL THE CRITTERS HERE ARE BEAUTIFULLY ANIMATED, LOOK EXCELLENT CLOSE-UP, SLOW-

THAT IS SERIOUS
HALITOSIS, MY FRIEND!

CHASE 'EM DOWN THROUGH CAVES!

BULLET SHOWER!

DOWN ONLY WHEN THE SCREEN BECOMES PACKED (A TINY PROBLEM IGUANA IS FIXING), HAVE DIFFERENT DEATH ANIMATIONS DEPENDING ON WHERE YOU HIT THEM, AND CAN BE BLOWN UP AGAIN AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN BY MISSILE OR GRENADE FIRE!

LACK OF SPACE PREVENTS ME FROM ELABORATING, BUT THE LATER LEVELS (MEDIEVAL IN ORIGIN, WITH MUCH MORE SCENIC INTERACTION), THE REALLY BIG MONSTERS (LIKE A HUGE T-REX), THE BEAUTIFUL SCENERY (THE INCA TEMPLES AND WATERFALL FOR EXAMPLE) AND THE RANDOM NATURE OF THE MAP LAYOUT (SOME AREAS CHANGE EVERY TIME YOU PLUG THE GAME IN, MEANING NO TWO GAMES ARE EVER THE SAME) MAKE THIS A TITLE TO REALLY GET EXCITED ABOUT. AND BELIEVE ME, I'M ECSTATIC!! MORE NEXT MONTH! *CH*

U UPDATE

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - IGUANA

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - 64 MB CART.

OF PLAYERS - 1

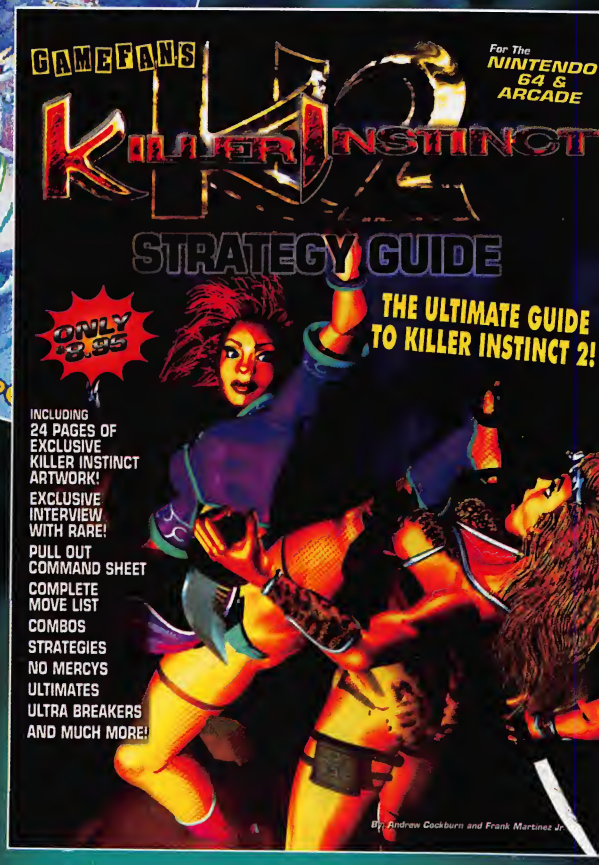
DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

CHIEF HAMBLETON
I'VE GOT RAPTOR
BLOOD ON MY BOOTS!

GAMEFAN BOOKS

PRESENTS...



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BLOOD OMEN LEGACY OF KAIN™

"CALL YOUR DOGS... THEY CAN FEAST ON YOUR CORPSES!"

Two and a half years... That's how long Silicon Knights have toiled over *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain*, the first American-bred full blown action-RPG for the Sony PlayStation. GameFan climbed on board the *Kain* bandwagon some two years ago, after catching a glimpse of the over world battles at the final Las Vegas based CES. Since, these talented individuals have assembled a cinematic masterpiece that has epic written all over it.. *Kain* is so epic as a matter of fact, that detailing the story alone would fill many pages with solid text. Suffice it to say, the story is of biblical proportions.

VORADOR

REVIEW

"YOU WILL HAVE THE BLOOD YOU HUNGER FOR"

PlayStation

DEVELOPER-SILICON KNIGHTS

PUBLISHER - CRYSTAL DYN.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

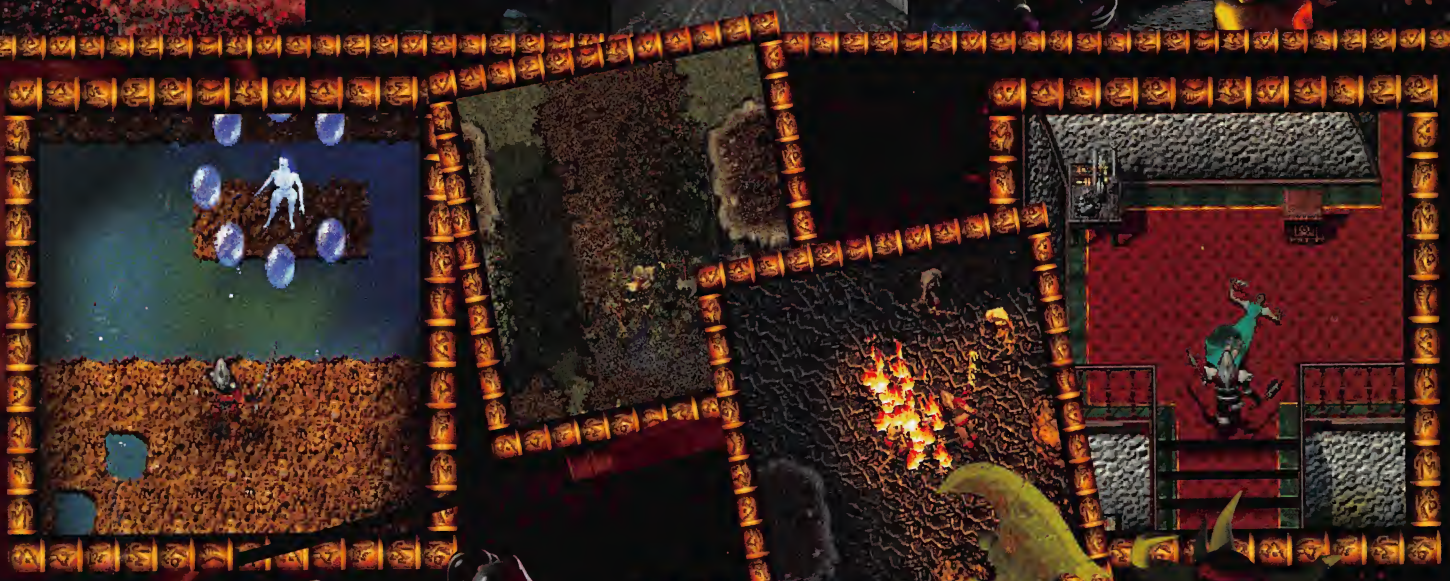
AVAILABLE OCTOBER

MORTANIUS
THE NECROMANCER

E. STORM
MY PLAYSTATION IS BLEEDING.

"NOTHING IS FREE- NOT EVEN REVENGE"

-KAIN



MALEK

PROTECTOR OF THE NINE
DAMNED WARRIOR

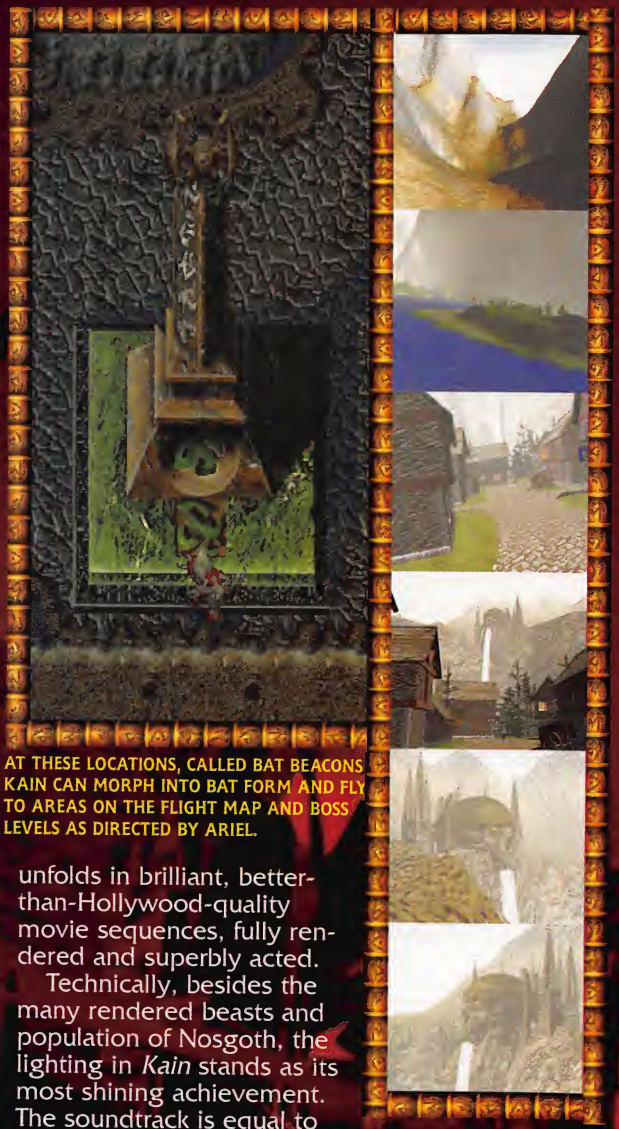
NUPRAPTOR

KAIN SEEKS HIS HEAD

DEEP WITHIN THIS KEEP LIES THE BONE ARMOR. SKELETAL BEASTS WINCE IN ITS PRESENCE.

The power-ups, weapons, armor, forms, spells, objects and tokens would fill many more. The action in *Kain* is pure top down, highly animated, mayhem, as you seek answers to fulfill your destiny after selling your soul for vengeance sake. The victim of a brutal slaying is Kain. Laced between these nomadic journeys the story unfolds in brilliant, better-than-Hollywood-quality movie sequences, fully rendered and superbly acted.

BESIDES RIPPING THROATS FROM HIS VICTIMS, KAIN'S WOLF FORM ALLOWS HIM TO JUMP OVER OTHERWISE IMPASSABLE OBSTACLES.



AT THESE LOCATIONS, CALLED BAT BEACONS KAIN CAN MORPH INTO BAT FORM AND FLY TO AREAS ON THE FLIGHT MAP AND BOSS LEVELS AS DIRECTED BY ARIEL.

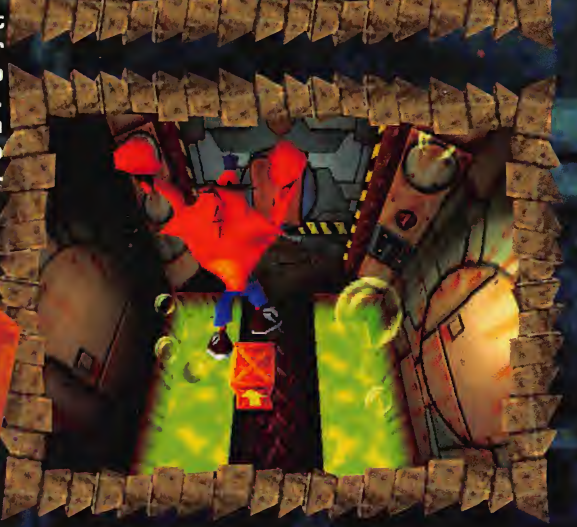
KAIN'S BEGUILE FORM ALLOWS HIM TO PASS THROUGH THE GENERAL POPULATION UNMOLESTED. NO ONE LIKES A VAMPIRE.

Technically, besides the many rendered beasts and population of Nosgoth, the lighting in *Kain* stands as its most shining achievement. The soundtrack is equal to the task as well, billowing out drama at every turn. *Kain* is said to be over 100 hrs. long, and it indeed seems to be. I've not touched on a tenth in this layout. So I am going to take the in depth approach with Kain as soon as the final tweaks have been made in MegaFan, but for this review's sake I can only say that if adventure is what you seek, then you need look no further. The most ambitious adventure game ever created awaits. *Kain* is in the final production stages and a late Oct./early Nov. release is imminent.

CRASH BANDICOOT

With the rest of GameFan nestled mesmerized in front of overheating Nintendo 64's, I set out to play ND's soon-to-be-legendary platformer, *Crash Bandicoot.* Today, the final copy has arrived (minus a crate or two) and therefore I am not only mired in my element but happier than a turkey the day after Thanksgiving. While I agree whole-heartedly that *Super Mario 64* is the decade's most innovative title and a perfect game in every way, I cannot put aside my undying love for brilliant, character-driven platform games. They are and will always be my favorite games. I'm not talking characters in general, but dead-on, researched, guaranteed hot ones. Nor do I speak of platforms in general, but pinpoint accurate down to the nose hair timing ones amongst moving and or disappearing platforms and hoards of enemies. It's the jumps and maneuvers that a novice gamer can't do (and by the time he has, is no longer a novice) that make me quiver with joy. When I began playing *Ninja Gaiden* on the NES I was a full blown rookie but when I finally finished I was a platform demon. These games are few (very few) and far (very far) between as they are the hardest to successfully conceive, balance,and finally market. But when it happens, which is a rare occurrence, it is truly an event.

With *Crash Bandicoot* I not only get pulse-pounding, edge-of-my-seat platforming along with burning hot level design, but the most eye-poppin'est visuals ever seen in a video game, period. There can be no arguments.



These are the best graphics that exist in a game. As for Crash himself, well, it took expert cartoonists, and designers from ND and Universal months just to perfect him. His animations, his weight, his control in the air, his mannerisms, his look, and his idles are all 100% perfection. Interestingly enough, Crash was originally to be placed in a go-anywhere environment similar to *Mario 64*'s, but in the interest of non-stop action ND decided to reinvent 2 & 3D gaming instead. It's funny, in pledging my allegiance to this title that is the one argument everybody has. "Sure the graphics are cleaner," they say, "but you can't go anywhere." Well, maybe I'm having so much fun right here I don't want to go anywhere else. I am of course referring to my fellow editors/critics who base so much on this premise. So then, am I saying that *Crash* is a better game after scoring *Mario* a perfect 100%? Well, no. I'm saying *Mario 64* is a perfect action/adventure and that *Crash* is a perfect action/platform. I like them equally... Is that legal? Let the E-mail begin!

By now I'm pretty sure you know what *Crash Bandicoot* is all about. It's a platformer in every sense of the word. Sure, there are hog rides (I could write a whole separate article on those) and boulder dashes (ditto) and gouraud shaded polygonal bosses in rooms that make you cry (double ditto) but there is also a high quality, excellently produced PCM soundtrack which heightens the experience by matching each scenario perfectly. When you hop on the hog you'll wanna squeal "yee-haw!" and when you're in the middle of Castle Machinery you'll feel like friggin' George Jetson. So then only one question remains to be answered... how long is it? Well, that all depends. Are you like, super coordinated, or do you have trouble clapping? The best players may finish *Crash* in a day. But finishing with a perfect 100% is another story. So I'll tell it. Breaking every crate, and earning every crystal will unlock hidden pleasures like you have never seen. But doing so is no easy task. Even you pros will find this a worthy quest, and you newborn gamers (welcome) will be better for

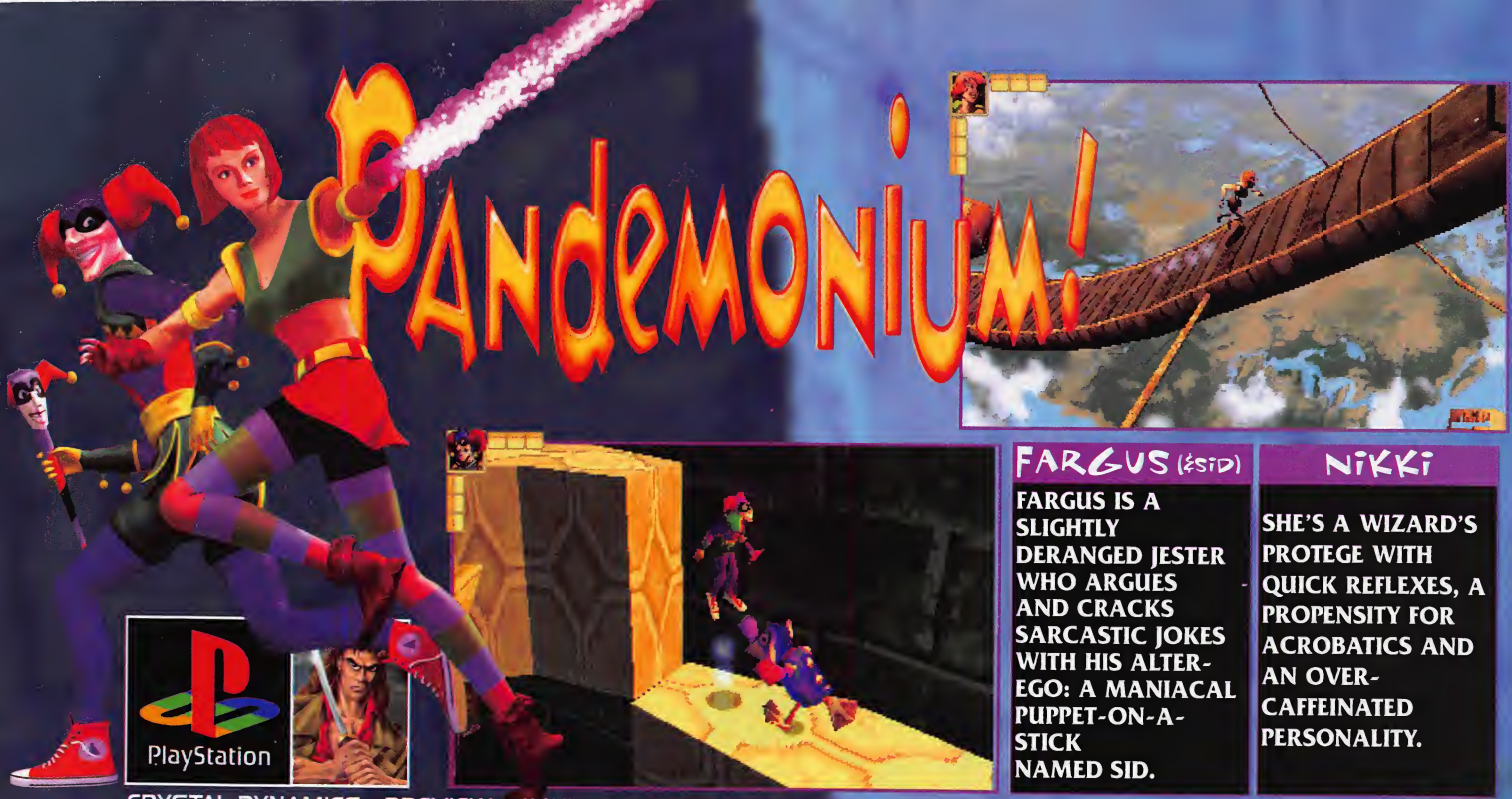
having achieved it.

I could ramble for days about *Crash Bandicoot* but if these screens (which depict only the third island) and this blazing testimonial don't get you to the check out counter, well, then nothing will, unless you fancy pipe wrenches and butt cracks. ***ES***

E. STORM

GIVE THOSE DOGS A GIANT SIZED MILK BONE!!

Pandemonium!



FARGUS (&SID)

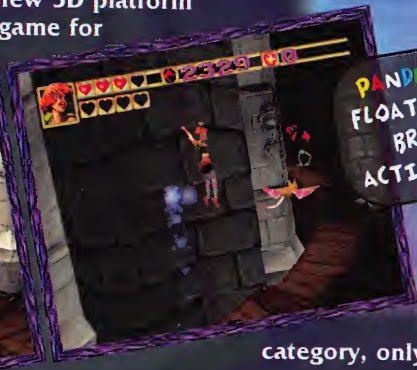
FARGUS IS A SLIGHTLY DERANGED JESTER WHO ARGUES AND CRACKS SARCASTIC JOKES WITH HIS ALTER-EGO: A MANIACAL PUPPET-ON-A-STICK NAMED SID.

NIKKI

SHE'S A WIZARD'S PROTEGE WITH QUICK REFLEXES, A PROPENSITY FOR ACROBATICS AND AN OVER-CAFFEINATED PERSONALITY.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS · PREVIEW · AVAIL. NOVEMBER

Avoiding obstacles, shooting and pirouetting atop the heads of enemies, timing jumps over moving platforms, outrunning deteriorating cat walks... you've done it all before. Only this time, the game is alive, a vast polygon erector set for you to explore. This is Pandemonium, Crystal Dynamics' new 3D platform game for

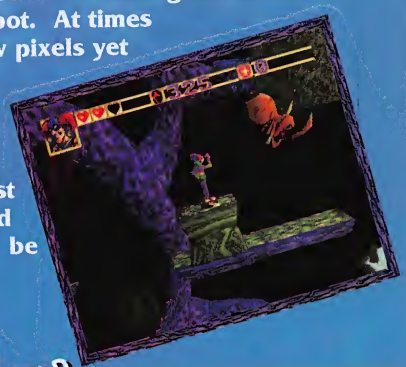


PANDEMONIUM'S FLOATING CAMERA BRINGS THE ACTION TO LIFE!

2D platform lovers. Now you can have your cake and stuff it in your face as well. It's about time. Pandemonium marks Crystal's second leap into the category, only this time unlike the conventional (but ever so close

to my heart) Gex, CD has taken steps to assure you get a truly unique experience that still embodies everything you love about the category. Let me take a moment and explain the dynamics in Pandemonium. The term 'floating camera' can be taken quite literally. You never have to change it...ever, yet it follows you constantly, panning and zooming wherever you go. And I'm talking about dramatic panning, not trailing behind in the same spot. At times Fargus and/or Nikki may be the size of just a few pixels yet you are still in complete control, as the camera brings them in to full view. You can be pressing right on the D-Pad while your character is looping up a tower or spiral staircase. Just think of right as forward and left as backward and you'll be fine.

The graphics, as you can see, are for the most part polygonal. Fargus, Nikki, the enemies, and the actual playfield are all constructed (and I do mean constructed) of texture mapped & gouraud shaded polygons. Only the backdrops, (which at this time, unfortunately, do not animate) are hand drawn. I'm hoping these animate in the final but won't be overly upset if they do not.



NIKKI VIEWS THE PERILS AHEAD...

Now on to the lighting, one of Pandemonium's many gleaming aspects. As with any next gen title, dramatic lighting can be the difference between a graphically good game and a splendid one. The designers obviously know this. Pandemonium has some of the

most awesome lighting fx I have ever seen on the PS. They're easily on par with Warhawk's and add an extra level of intensity to each locale. Another unique (or soon to be unique) feature in Pandemonium is that both Nikki and Fargus speak throughout the game. Now, this could be a tragic feature, but as we all know Crystal Dynamics hires real actors. In this case they've opted for two hot stand up comedians.

Though this feature was not present in our preview copy I can see how it would either add to or really break the game. Let's hope the ladder is true. And finally, to wrap up this inspired 2nd preview I must comment on the games soundtrack. This is far and away the best music out of a Crystal Dynamics title I've heard yet. Pandemonium's soundtrack not only fits the action incredibly well, but it's just plain great. Three selections were present in our preview and if the rest is as impressive, Pandemonium will indeed be complete . So, there you have it. I'll see you soon with the Pandemonium review. ***ES***

CASPER

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - FUNCOM

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

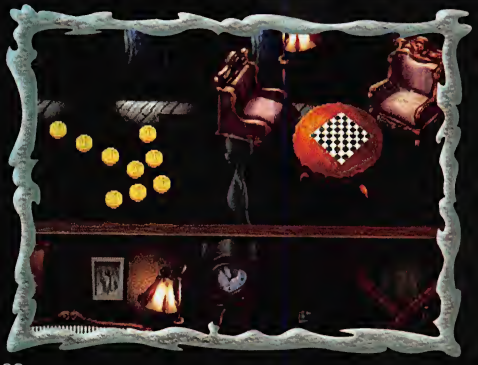
DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

CHIEF HAMBLETON
A QUARTET OF SPOOKS, AND PUZZLES TO MAKE YOU MOAN AND GROAN!

After Interplay's 3DO version, the spook-filled mansion investigation title based on the hit film was laid to rest... until now, with a resurrection in the shape of a PlayStation port-over. It seems that Interplay have spent the intervening time sharpening the in-game graphics, improving the sound and speech while also preening the 3DO's grainy intro sequence. Those of you who've already read E. Storm's preview (Vol. 4, Iss. 4) will know what to expect; it's time for some mammoth paranormal exploration antics courtesy of the friendliest ghost you know!

Currently around the 50% complete mark, this creepy haunt sees the balloon-headed boy ghost floating about the mansion in search of gifts to present to his two human friends. This isn't as easy as it sounds, and is only the start of a massive adventure that takes you through the whole of the mansion, the surrounding gardens and beyond in an attempt to assemble the fabled Lazarus machine; the key to a fleshy future! Of course, your task isn't that easy, with three horrors (in the form of Fatso, Stretch and Stinkie) to face, and a multitude of other missions to take on as you wander through this house that time forgot.



So what's it like to play? Well, oddly enough, Casper can't float through walls (but then, the game would be over in minutes if he could, wouldn't it?), but he's got a pair of huge ethereal pockets where loads of items and keys can be collected, and as you'd imagine, keys play an important part here. You use and lose a key every time you open a door or chest, so be wary! Colored doors need colored keys, and apart from that, there's various switches to press, levers to pull, but little in the way of bad guys (apart from the three ectoplasmic stooges). This means you'll be covering the mansion all alone, so keep your cool, collect your food (Casper chomps away on all manner of tidbits) and try not to let the music and groaning noises freak you out!

After an extended play test, I was still nowhere near completing the majority of tasks, as this game's going to keep you playing for hours and hours on end. The tasks are simple enough, but the expansive mansion levels mean you'll be trekking around for ages. You'll just be on the edge of infuriation when suddenly you'll figure out that simple puzzle you'd been stuck on for half an hour, and a whole new area pops into view. There's also special skills to learn, such as turning yourself into ecto-

plasmic mist, and you can use this to teleport to yet more unseen areas through air vents. The screenshots make this out to be a kiddy title, but believe me, the puzzles are darn fiendish to the point of absolute insanity (just ask Mike)!

Despite the enthralling nature of the game, I have a few niggling reservations, such as the hours of needless wandering, slight loading problems and a lack of character interaction (it's essentially only Casper you'll see for the first few hours of play), but these small problems are far outweighed by the lavishly drawn graphics, excellent speech, huge field of play and cutesy character design. Rest assured, as soon as I've got my paws on a finished copy, I'll be gliding through the rest of this game as fast as a Fleshy can!

CH

DIE HARD TRILOGY

SIMON GRUBER

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PROBE

PUBLISHER - FOX INTER.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

GLITCH
HIT MOVIES, A GREAT GAME, AND A BLOODY WIND-SHIELD?! SOUNDS LIKE A PICNIC IN CENTRAL PARK!

Die Hard Trilogy has been one huge project from start to finish. The Probe staff literally doubled in size to produce the biggest release Fox Interactive has ever attempted. Their efforts have paid off in spades; *DHT* may be one of the best games ever, and certainly one of the best this year.

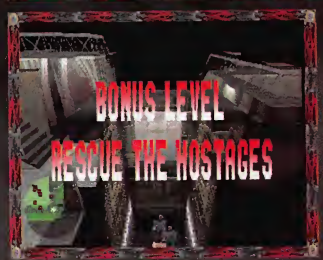
I guess there's like, one person, in the universe, who has never seen a *Die Hard* flick. I suppose maybe five people, in the world, haven't seen all three movies in the *Trilogy*. So, what the heck, I'll give those six people a brief summary of the sequence of events in the movies. Bruce Willis plays John Maclean – all-American, tank-top wearin', gun-totin' super-hero bent on bad guy elimination.

EAT THIS!!

In *Die Hard*, our hero, a New York cop, has his first experience with super-bad timing when he flies to L.A. for a Christmas visit with his kids. He's meeting his wife, Holly, at Nakatomi Plaza, where her company is having its annual Christmas party. Without warning, serious euro-terrorists crash the party and take over the plaza, demanding the release of various international prisoners in exchange for the lives of their high-profile hostages. All of this becomes a front for a simple heist-of Nakatomi Plaza's rich money vault. John escapes and becomes a lone hero, running loose in the high rise, out to save the lives of the hostages and rid the building of the terrorist menace.

DIE HARD Our tank-topped, bare-footed, texture-mapped, polygon Maclean is sent on his mission to rescue hostages and clear out Nakatomi's mess of bad guys. Ultimately, within the locations given (parking garage, lobby, conference room, etc.), you'll be judged mainly on how well you blow bad guys away. You'll be alternating between 18 different levels of the Plaza, facing varying amounts of gun-toting terrorists during your trips in and out of floors.

Maclean's movements are a touch on the stiff side, but you should be able to handle it in no time, along with his strangely liberal means of jumping and side-rolling to avoid a bullet's sting. As you venture through the sky-scraping bedlam, there's loads of power-ups to acquire to help further the rapturous delight to be had in the annihilation of your foes. We're talkin' M-65s ("I got me a machine gun!"), grenades ("Happy trails!"), and explosive shotguns (no quote, just curtains for anyone in the room). *DH* is extremely tough, and also inexplicably satisfying, so plan on arbitrarily raining on everyone's parade and lovin' it. You'll also love the constant light-sourcing effects, innovative scrolling (walls fade away in time to reveal the next room), and awesome battle tunes.



In *Die Harder*, Maclean finds himself wrapped-up in another wild terrorist plot. This time, as he waits for his wife at Dulles airport, more bad guys feel 'tis the season to be nasty. As a big-shot South-American drug lord is being flown to a maximum security prison, the terrorists take over Dulles, smack-dab in the middle of Christmas traffic, to demand the forced landing of the military plane carrying the drug king. Maclean feels it's his duty as a super cop to put an end to this villainous charade and ensure the safe landing of the circling planes (including, of course, poor Holly's flight).

DIE HARDER Anyone up for a super-charged game of *Virtua Cop*? *Die Harder* is just that and so much more. Beginning outside the Dulles airport terminals, you'll quickly become sucked into a super-smooth first-person blast-fest where anything goes. When I say anything, whoa baby... anything!

Basically, if you see something, it can be shot, and the on-screen image will be destroyed, stay that way, and often reveal a power-up or bonus. Grenades, missiles, machine-guns, shields, health, and tracer-fire are among the virtual armory of power-ups that are offered. The point and shoot control is virtually perfect, and your on screen target can be color changed for better visibility on different levels.

Get this: Although the game is essentially on tracks, destroying enemies in a certain order will often spin the camera into secret locations that yield bonuses galore. Amazingly, you can play the same level many times and still find a new area that slipped by the last time. *DH2* has six full, chronologically correct levels with "Head Honcho" bosses, insane situations, and enough action to literally be it's own game. The textures are brilliant, the multi-directional scrolling of the textured polygons is flawless, and, as always, the tunes are rockin' you through the bloodbath in style.

Finally, in *Die Hard with a Vengeance*, we actually get to see Maclean in his element: New York City. Simon Gruber, brother of the late Hans Gruber (seen plummeting to his demise in *Die Hard*) decides to plunge the city into chaos with bomb threats. With a monkey on Maclean's back, and a big-time chip on Simon's shoulder, the bomb chase catapults our hero and his ill-fortuned sidekick throughout the city, tracking down the villain's well-laid explosives on every command of "Simon Says." Involving high-speed car chases and wide open settings, as opposed to the first two film's location-specific battles, some say *DH3* was the best film in the trilogy. This one definitely goes BOOM a whole lot more times than the others...and I just love seeing things blow up, you know.

DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE

Now I *know* you don't mess with a New York cabby. Probe has managed to infuse *DH Trilogy* with an all-consuming sense of total pandemonium and the trend continues in chapter three.

Using your trusty on-screen compass, you're forced to chase down bombs set to explode while the greater timer counts down the BIG bomb rigged to blow the entire city away. You're in control of an NYC taxi which handles pretty well (you'll get used to it – brake often!) and is completely invincible, no matter how much damage it ends up taking. As you drive the cab, the pressure is always on, and just as you think that last bomb was it, a "bomb car" zooms into view and a *Chase HQ*-style race begins. You then enter a rubber-burning pursuit, while the bomb timer clicks away, to smash the car before it can blow up. At certain points, you'll be offered a car-swap and jump into the seat of a tougher and speedier police cruiser to run down the bomb threat. While motoring between the city's booming skyscrapers, real-time lens flares will glisten over the screen creating a dazzling "you're there" experience that has to be seen to be fully appreciated. Don't worry, after you've had enough of the street madness (like you could ever tire of seeing impacted bystanders splashing into your windshield, and having the bloody carnage cleaned off by working windshield wipers!), you can enter Central Park to chase more psycho bomb cars. I was thinking, for a moment, that the bomb chase concept was going to be it, but soon enough, like the movie, I'm pounding my dump truck through the aqueducts.

Just seeing the inclusion of the huge wave – even as I was crushed by it – made me smile in approval. All the way up to the Docks, *DH3* can be seen and played at a frenzied pace that very rarely stops pleasing. Probe's custom 3D engine handles loads of screen info, and keeps the frame rate running between 20 and 30 per second constantly, making driving a visual experience as well as a bomb-bursting good time. You simply haven't lived till you've chased down a hot dog truck in the middle of the afternoon in Central Park.

As you can tell from this review, I had a blast with *Die Hard Trilogy*. It's been a while since I spent a major amount of time playing a licensed movie game that was such a joy to play. Each game could have been a full solo release, but instead they're all available, in one gigantic action-fest, on one disc. *DH Trilogy* fulfills so many action requirements, in so many ways, that I firmly believe anyone will be satisfied. Besides, I haven't had so much fun blowin' stuff up in a long, long time.

G

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

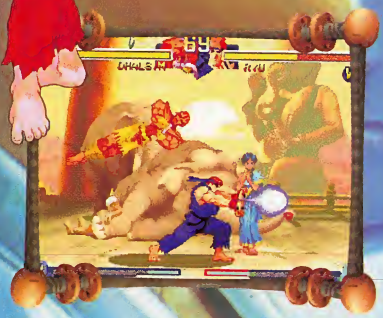
CHIEF HAMBLETON
ARCADE-PERFECT JOY FOR SIXTY BUCKS!!

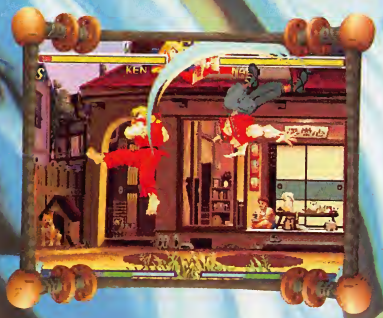
After a couple of pictures last month and a preview of the Saturn port-over, the almost final PlayStation version of *Street Fighter Alpha 2* (or *Zero* in Japan) is here, and thankfully, it's as exact a replica of the coin-op as you could wish for. As you can see from the screenshots, PlayStation *Alpha 2* looks exactly like its quarter-munching big brother, full of crisp cartoon sprites and colorful explosions, while retaining the same degree of joystick-wiggling mastery needed to turn any of the World Warriors into a rampant killing machine.

This 18 player fight-fest is easily the most stunning display of the PlayStation's 2D capabilities, especially after the problems developing *DarkStalkers*, and shows that in the right hands, highly complex character movements can be handled with a minimum loss of frame animation. Yes, there are some frames missing, but you're not likely to notice the difference at all unless you compare arcade and PlayStation side by side. The PlayStation version also compares favorably with Saturn *Alpha 2*, as I couldn't notice any difference in speed and animation between the two. Indeed, at times (compared to the Saturn demo, and let me stress the word *demo*) the PlayStation actually steals a lead over the Sega port (a first for 2D fighters!).

Firstly, the loading times are slightly quicker on the PlayStation version. Why, I don't know; they must have some programming gods working over at Capcom headquarters (and this is likely to change when we receive the final Saturn copy). Secondly, the samples are much, much clearer and crisp on the PlayStation as Capcom appears to have used the original audio master tapes to work from. This has varied benefits over the PCB (where the Saturn sound was taken from) and you can really hear every shriek, cry and dragon punch hit home. Just crank up the sound when *A2* gets released, and you'll *hear* what I mean. Stereo grunts and sounds of fist hitting flesh never sounded so good!

The only weird difference between this and the arcade (apart from that slight loss of animation) are the shadows on the custom combos. Capcom has changed these ever so slightly to a hyper-vivid purple color, which doesn't matter to me one bit (I think they look





really cool, and distinguish between attacks even more), but some gamers looking for an exact port may sniffle and humph slightly. What matters more though is the gameplay and timing of all your special attacks. Rest assured, should you crank up the turbo speed to the eighth and fastest setting, this runs exactly the same as the Super NES Turbo version. Just simply stunning stuff!

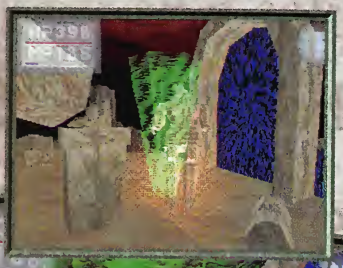
Everything else is pretty much identical, including the rows of cyclists on the Chun Li stage, and music-wise, everything is exactly as it should be, right down to the awesome sounds of Akuma's cave stage and the bon-tempi groove of Ken's boating barbeque. The only wrench in the works is the unbelievable introduction, which is FMV footage of the arcade attract screens!! Grainy and lacking polish, this looks rather out of place, especially compared to the graphical feast that lies within. No Evil Ryu code either (we expected that), and word on the other secret features shall be revealed next issue.

Despite the intro, this is another version of *Street Fighter*, another awesome playing experience and another gem from the vaults of Capcom, who really seem to be on a roll lately. And now I'm off to completely dissect this awesome piece of software. Expect the full review (and a whole host of secrets revealed) next issue, but until then... SSHOOORYYUUUKENNN!!! ***CH***

KING'S FIELD III

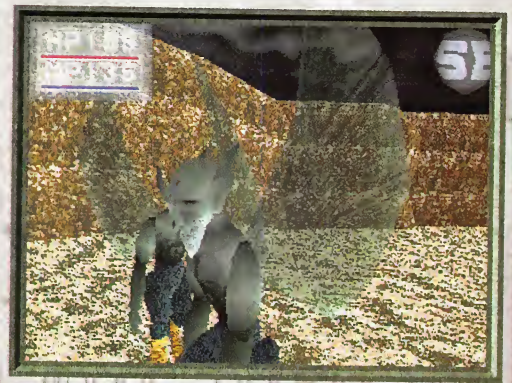
Nobody likes RPGs better than the freaks here at GameFan and PlayStation examples don't come much better than *King's Field III*. The game is ranking well on many PlayStation chart listings in Japan at the moment, even topping the likes of *Tekken 2* and *Bio Hazard*! Just how well *KFIII* does over here is anyone's guess, but judging by the massive success of *KFII* in the US, second only to *Street Fighter Alpha* for six weeks, expect an already huge following to snap it up the instant it hits the shelves!

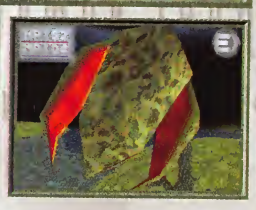
What is immediately clear is that *King's Field III* features some immense improvements over the previous title. The superior graphics should be obvious from the glorious screenshots that adorn these pages. The developers (From Software) have created a sprawling environment, eight times larger than *KFII*, and packed it full of detailed, texture-mapped scenery and buildings. Eerie lighting and shading effects create the appropriate atmosphere and despite the extra attention to detail the scrolling speed has actually increased significantly. Monsters? Well, they are just about everywhere, with the superior game engine able to handle many more on screen at one time with no visible slowdown. Battles are tougher now, though From have gone to great lengths to make the initial stages of the game easier to get to grips with. Sure, careless play can get you killed very quickly, but patient exploration is the key to completing this mammoth quest. Don't expect to finish this game overnight!



Almost every area of the game has been enhanced, though there are no drastic changes as such, with interesting additions to the combat, magic and knowledge systems. The new spells are incredible to behold.

SEIZE THE HOLY SWORD AND WIN BACK YOUR KINGDOM!
THE FATE OF THE FUTURE LIES IN YOUR HAND...





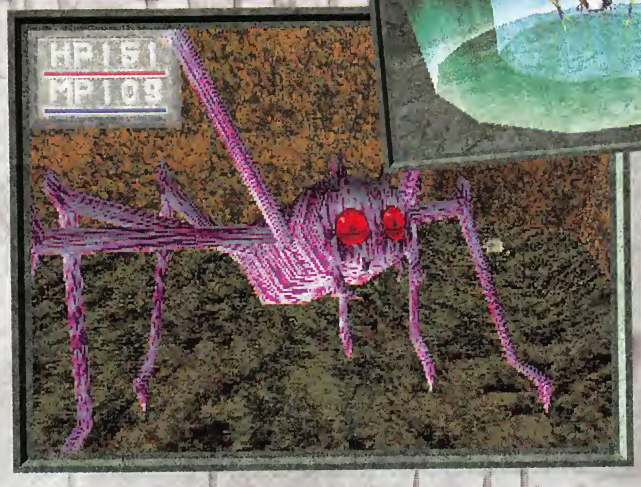
Check out the awesome *Meteor* or *Lightning* incantations on this page! These mystic mumblings can really do some damage, to your character also if you stand too close!

As you progress through the game, you can equip a variety of new weapons and armor, each increasing your character's abilities in certain areas. Some relics work specifically with another item or magic while reducing your capabilities in another area. Discovering the true nature of certain artifacts is where the new Knowledge system comes into play. As you increase in level your brainpower improves, thus allowing you to discern the function of an item. This is essential for some items that you may stumble across with no clue as to its use.

DISCOVER THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF POWER AND THE ULTIMATE MAGIC SHALL BE YOURS!
ONLY THE MOONLIGHT SWORD CAN RE-UNITE THE WORLD! ARE YOU THE 'CHOSEN ONE?'

The presentation is pretty cool with the game opening to a ominously dark and moody rendered CG intro at the start of the adventure. During the game, look for the excellent animated cut scenes whenever you uncover a hidden secret. One such scene features a wizard summoning huge pillars of flame from the ground, while another has you taking a slow walk through a palace made from ice! Expect something special when you complete the game (We've seen two endings already and they are fantastic). These little touches are really neat!

Before I go, special mention should be made about the music. It is soooo atmospheric, with impressively orchestrated tunes combined with subtle ambient effects such as dripping water and howling wind. My favorite has to be the chilling score that echoes through the mountains during your search of the High Elf continent. *King's Field III* has had huge success in Japan and the US version (to be called *King's Field II*) is sure to do well when it's eventually released. Full review very soon. ***CH***



UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - FROM SOFT.

PUBLISHER - ASCII

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

CHIEF HAMBLETON
HAIL TO THE KING'S FIELD, BABY!

REVIEW

BURNING ROAD

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TOKA

PUBLISHER - P.I.E

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

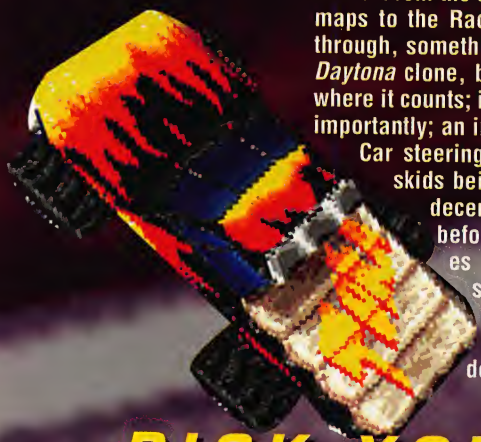
DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING

AVAILABLE - NOW

CHIEF HAMBLETON
A DAYTONA BY ANY OTHER NAME...

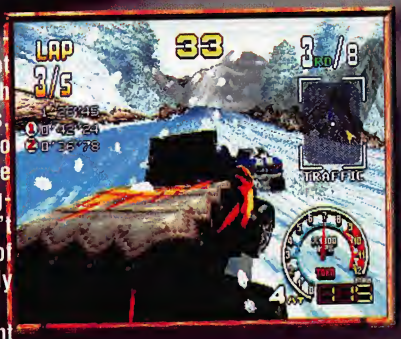
With the might of Namco and Psygnosis behind them, Sony Computer Entertainment has succeeded in the past by delivering consistently first rate racers to the public. Who can forget the adrenaline rush of playing *Ridge Racer* for the first time, or the futuristic hover-sled action of *WipeOut*? Classics, all of them and with good reason; they melded fast-paced gameplay with fantastic sound and visuals. Now the French have invaded, bringing their own racer onto the PlayStation in the shape of *Burning Road*. Being a *Ridge Racer* and *Daytona* freak, I jumped at the chance to see how this stood up against the big boys. Mirror, signal, maneuver... car carnage time! Well before E3, this title had earned the nickname 'Dayclona USA,' and with good reason; the visuals bore a remarkable similarity to Sega's flagship title. With the final version nestling in my PlayStation, I finally had the chance to comment on these rumors. The conclusion? Yep, this is a blatant *Dayclona* and no mistake!

In fact, the visuals were so similar to the Sega game graphic libraries that I had to stop playing and check to make sure my PlayStation joypad wasn't linked to a hidden Saturn under my desk! From the radar screen, the viewpoints, car decals, texture-maps to the Race Leader sign, this is pure *Daytona* through and through, something you should be prepared for. Okay, so this is a *Daytona* clone, but is it a good one? Thankfully, the game excels where it counts; it has great gameplay, a decent challenge and more importantly; an incredible sensation of speed.



Car steering is pure (wait for it) *Daytona*, with powersliding skids being the norm when cornering, and this gives you a decent amount of time to learn and hone your skills before progressing to another of the three main courses offered. The first is a standard course through straights, tunnels and past windmills; but once you've graduated, there's the second course through the elements, with cars venturing through desert, water and snow on a quest for the checkered

PICK YOUR FAVORITE VEHICLE!



flag. Obviously, the developers slotted a couple of bucks into Namco's *Dirt Dash* when they, er, *gathered* the ideas for this course. Then the oily action moves onwards to the nighttime freeway course with many twists to maneuver through, and a 747 taking off overhead (*Ridge Racer*, anyone?). Finally, there's numerous secrets to discover (I won't spoil it for you) and more tracks for the true racing professional; all of which adds longevity to an already polished release.

There are a few flies in the ointment, however. First, the sound is very poor indeed, from the average drone of the cars' engines to the nondescript 'attempts' to emulate the *Daytona* music tracks (not a wise decision in any case). But the worst sinner has to be the commentator; a French dude dragged off the streets to record disjointed, sometimes unintelligible mumbling and often unintentionally hilarious comments. Not since the days of *World Heroes 2* on the Neo•Geo has such speech generated such interest for all the wrong reasons. Another minor failing are the cars. Although there's four to choose from, three of them pale when compared to the might of the black truck – the only one which corners magnificently at speed, meaning there's three cars you don't need to race with. Finally, I was disappointed at the lack of a two-player mode; this would have elevated an already commendable racer into the realms of true stardom.

Despite these niggles (which don't deter from the excellent gameplay too much), this is a highly derivative but enthralling racer, full of options and guaranteed to turn your knuckles white. Just drive down the icy canyon roads at full tilt and you'll be amazed at the sensation of speed, and the bumps in the road (along with numerous objects from trash cans to road signs) add a real sense of realism. Add the excellent replay feature (of your entire race, not just edited highlights) and you've got a winning racing combination that's already been tested in arcades by *Dirt Dash* and *Daytona* (Cunning, eh? Playmates already knows it'll sell by the truckload!). A little more originality (and a total musical overhaul) and this would have been up there with *Ridge Racer Revolution*... ***CH***

STAR GLADIATOR

INCREDIBLE 3-D FIGHTING ACTION!!

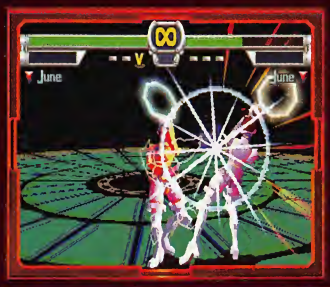
PERFECT CAPCOM CONVERSION!!

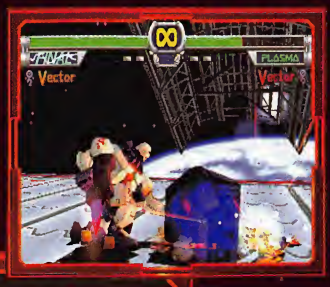
Capcom's first 3D fighting title (and second 3D polygon game after *Resident Evil*) has finally arrived, and believe me, we weren't expecting *Star Gladiators* to be quite such the superb playing experience it turned out to be! The early version we saw looked very promising, but with Namco and Sega (the two big arcade 3D fighting kings) lining up for another bout of fisticuff action and trying different tactics (super deformed children vs. medieval warriors this time...), Capcom's game wasn't anticipated with the same drooling delight as *VF Kids* and *Soul Edge*. Then we played it and came away in ecstatic shock. Start salivating now, people, because this phenomenal fight fest is coming your way soon!

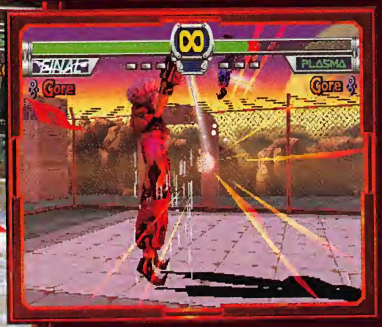
After almost twelve hours solid play on this almost complete PlayStation version (yep, these are all actual PlayStation shots!), I have to admit I'm enthralled. The first reason why is immediately obvious: The in-game graphics are astonishing. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that these graphics are the most lavish of any PlayStation 3D beat-'em-up I've ever seen (and I'm *Tekken 2*'s number one fan!). That's not to say it moves as well as *Tekken 2*, but the level of detail on characters and backdrops is mind-boggling!

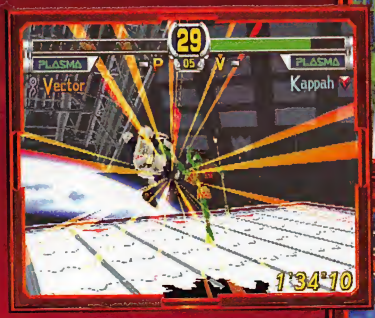
And the fun doesn't stop there either! The ten galactic competitors move about the 3D combat zones with the grace and poise of real motion-capture, in a similar way to *Soul Edge*'s fighters. The action takes place at a constant 30 fps rate, and every move of every character is carried out with believable and astounding detail, right down to the sparkling explosions of light, shards of dissipating energy and weapon light trails. Add to this some pretty spectacular light sourcing for the characters, no glitching whatsoever and some brilliant orchestral music and you're some way to realizing just what a pleasure this is to behold.

Okay, okay; the graphics are great (did I make that point strongly enough?), but what about the characters and how does it actually play? Well thankfully, Capcom doesn't disappoint here, either (did ya really think they would?). There are ten selectable









though), and stepping in next is Vector, a Wild-3 (from *Zero Divide*) style robot with pulse rifle programmed to burn! He scoots and shuffles to the accompaniment of air jets and mechanical grinding, and has a Cylon laser eye that does much more than look cool! Then comes the skull-club wielding Rimgal. He breaths fire and chomps away at his foe when he's not bludgeoning him to death. Next up, Zelkin is a mysterious bird-man with a double-bladed vibro knife and an awesome airborne attack. To complete our ten, we have the hideous mutation known as Gore, complete with poisons and curly-toed sandals, whose bigger than he looks! Oh, and finally before I move on, I found a couple of other characters (not selectable yet): a strange hopping Frog God called Kappah (very odd) and the final boss, Bilstein; a samurai Darth Vader with strong chopping moves and some unbelievable techniques (watch for his glowing vortex!).

Gladiators to choose from, and all look amazingly cool. First is Hayato, a wandering warrior bearing more than a passing resemblance to *Toshinden*'s Eiji, and armed with a fast swiping katana arm. Next is June, the token female (she could be Sofia's cousin!), armed with a holo-halo and as quick as lightning. Next is Saturn, a moon-walking alien with double yo-yo action and more teeth than a Ferrari gearbox! Then comes the turn of the lumbering Gamof, like a Wookiee with an attitude, and an ax like Rock's (from *Soul Edge*). Watch for his Zangief piledriver!

Fifth in is Gerelt, a pony-tailed cyber-fencer and the quickest of the lot (not sure about the mustache,

Due to space constraints, I can't enthuse about the combat system, plasma moves and the awesome final attacks, but worry not, and ready yourself for the *Star Gladiator* onslaught next month as we go through advanced moves and those sizzling combos! In the mean time, hats off to Capcom! It's a masterpiece!

CH

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 4TH QUARTER

CHIEF HAMBLETON

WEE-DOGGY! CAPCOM HAS REALLY DELIVERED THE GOODS THIS TIME! YESSIREE!!

LEARN THE SIZZLING COMBOS!

UNLEASH THE PLASMA ATTACK!!

Breath of Fire III

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - 2ND QTR. '97

NICK ROX
UNBELIEVABLE! CAPCOM HAS AN RPG LOVER'S *DREAM* HERE – IF THEY GIVE IT THE TRANSLATION IT DESERVES

Capcom has crafted an RPG engine to rival those I see in my dreams. I say "engine" because at this point that's all *Breath of Fire III* really is. The actual game can only be played for about an hour, and every other area has to be accessed with a debug code. Even this early in the game's development, however, it's clear that *BoFIII*'s "2.5-D" environments will make for one heck of an RPG experience.

The minimal story in this version has workers in the iron mines of Dauna discovering a massive, desiccated dragon skeleton. Within, they find a baby dragon enclosed in a crystal egg. The dragon is shipped out of the mine, but escapes en route and falls into the vast Seeda Woods. Soon after, two brothers, Ray and Tipo, discover a naked human boy deep within the forest...

Of course, the boy turns out to be the eternal hero of the *Breath of Fire* series, Ryu. Capcom's digging themselves into one painful storyline hole, though... we saw Ryu as a toddler in *BoFII*, and he was nowhere NEAR a forest, *or* two woodland brothers. Maybe each new game in this series is a "what if" scenario or something...

At any rate, all the locations in the game are constructed of polygons, giving a very *Dark Savior*-like appearance. The graphics in *BoFIII*, however, are much better. They're so good, in fact, that still shots of the game almost look hand-drawn. Most of the zones weren't populated yet, except by enemies that bring up the familiar *Breath of Fire* combat system, this time returning to the icon-based fights of *BOFI*.

Not much more can be said at this point, but we'll bring you more *Breath of Fire III* ASAP! ***NR***

REVIEW

PROJECT: HORNED OWL

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SCEJ

PUBLISHER - SCEA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE - NOW

CHIEF HAMBLETON
HORNED OWL?
SPIKED TURKEY
MORE LIKE!

After a six-month wait, US gamers can now 'look forward' to the release of Sony's futuristic blaster, complete with a plastic phazer in the bargain! Yep, Saturn owners may have had the awesome replica *Virtua Cop* gun, but PlayStation folk must be dancing in the streets at the prospect of wielding a toy pistol as they battle the robotic onslaught at the heart of this game.

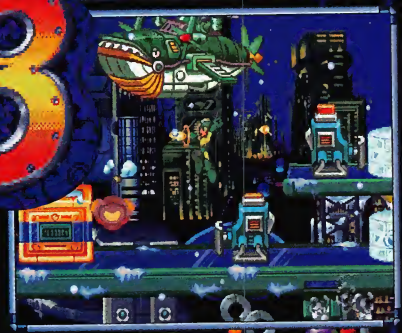
Once you've sat through the admittedly rather smart cartoon introduction, the choice of police officer, and the really weird firing range test (fire the gun and just hope it's targeted correctly), the full horror of this title is finally revealed. Yes, you can dress up a software release in all manner of fancy intro sequences (*Philosoma* being the prime example), but if the gameplay itself doesn't measure up, you might as well forget the whole experience. And unfortunately, *Horned Owl*'s gameplay is a phenomenally shallow and sometimes downright tedious experience.

Think *Virtua Cop*, with the action remaining constantly 'on-rails' with 3D backgrounds zooming about the screen. "Cool!" you might think, but wait until you see the state of the enemies! A lackluster bunch of badly animated 2D blocky foes aren't what I'd want to be facing after shelling out my bucks, that's for sure. I'd want 3D polygon dudes with shades on to gun down! The problem here is the lack of exciting monster designs; they're all waves of boring robots that die appallingly in a shower of what looks like sparks.

So, despite the on-hand talents of Masamune Shirow (arch-genius and creator of such anime classics as *Ghost in the Shell*), the game itself remains a truly limited gaming experience (in a genre with a short longevity to begin with), especially as we stomped through (or should that be 'endured'?) four levels without losing a single life! So to recap: good idea, lovely cut-scenes, but boring levels, tedious monsters and embarrassing 'buddy' cop talk that sounded much better (and more frantic) in Japanese. My advice is to wait for *Virtua Cop 2* or *Time Crisis*, and steer well clear. ***CH***

PREVIEW

ROCKMAN 8



First, an apology: I'm sorry the GameFan debut of *MegaMan 8* (known in Japan as *RockMan*, hence the logo) was relegated to half a page. Were the issue not so tight, and had our early version consisted of more than half of two levels, *MM8* would have received many more pages, and in the future it shall. Now, to business...

In an era of blocky polygon characters that look as if they were crafted by a whittler missing more than a few fingers, Capcom continues to deliver the 2-D, hand-drawn goods, and *MM8* is no exception to the rule. Our super-early preview had at least three layers of parallax and *NightWarriors*-quality animation, along with trademark *MegaMan* tunes and gameplay. A couple of new play mechanics have been added, such as the Mega Ball, a new weapon inspired by the not-too-exciting *MegaMan Soccer* of yore, and the ability to swim. Whether other gameplay features will be added remains to be seen: This version was so early it didn't have any stage-end bosses yet. We'll be back with a more comprehensive *MM8* preview as soon as we have a new version! ***NR***

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE '97

NICK ROX
HE KEEPS TICKING, AND TICKING, AND TICKING...

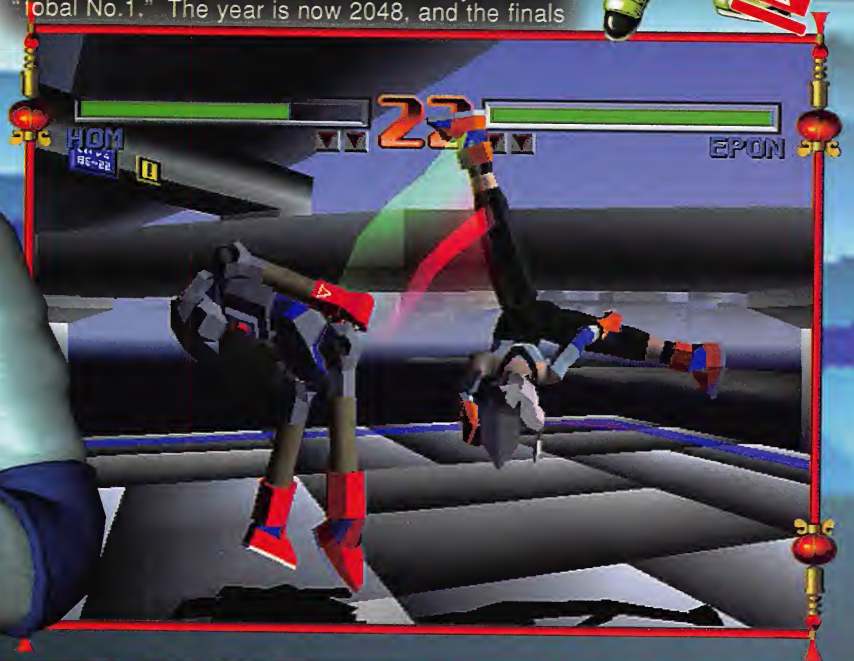
SET YOUR ADRENALINE

ON FIRE

Tobal No.1

One could say that *Tobal No.1* represents the "new Square." It's their first fighting game, their first 32-bit release, and the first game to be distributed through Japanese convenience stores via their new label, Digicube. In my heart of hearts, I wish Square would stick to RPGs... but I have to admit, *Tobal No.1* is the best original home fighting game of all time.

The story, penned by supremely famous (and beyond godly) Japanese manga artist Akira Toriyama of *Dragon Quest*, *Chrono Trigger* and *Dragon Ball* fame, is rather mundane: In the year 2027, an investigation ship from Earth discovers a planet with ten moons called Tobal. The planet is very similar to Earth, and is nearly devoid of pollution. After highly-prized Molmoran ore is discovered on Tobal, earthlings flock to the mines on the new planet. The emperor of Tobal, who welcomes the visitors warmly, is a fighting fanatic who sponsors a tournament every 200 days called "Tobal No.1." The year is now 2048, and the finals



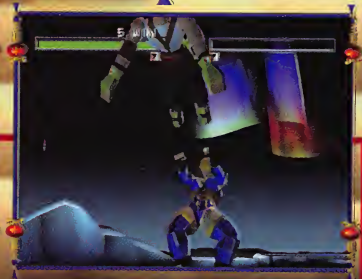
Characters ©1996 Square/Dream Factory, Bird Studio/Shueisha. Art by Akira Toriyama.

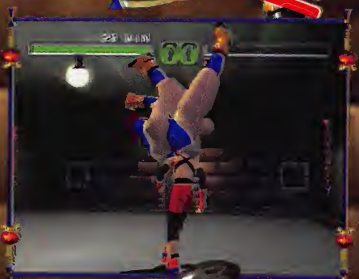
of the 98th Tobal No.1 are about to begin...

Tobal No.1 is like no fighting game you've ever played. Forget almost everything you know about fighters (except a touch from *Tekken* and *VF*) before you dive into this game... it's time to re-learn the genre! The most exciting new gameplay feature in *Tobal* is the ability to move freely in all directions. Push up, and you move into the background. Push back, and you move toward the camera. To compensate, jumping has been transferred to a button and ducking is accomplished by holding Block and pressing down. Not to worry, though – jumping in this game only launches you a couple feet high, just like real life. Therefore it's not used much – to avoid low attacks and to attack the enemy when they're down, mostly. The attacks are divided into High, Medium and Low buttons, and the High and Low attacks can be made stronger by holding down Block. The key point of *Tobal*'s play mechanics, however, is the incredibly complex grappling system. After initiating a grab by pressing Block and Medium Attack, you have over nine options at your fingertips – up to five throws, holds, head-butts, knee bashes, etc., as well as tossing your opponent aside so their back's to you. In addition, your opponent has a number of throw reversals they can pull on *you!* This system's so well thought out that each fighter has multiple throws depending

on what angle you come at them - front, back, left or right. With nary a week's play time, I shouldn't comment on the combo system, but I will mention a unique aspect of it: For "connect-the-dots" button tap combos, you can enter the entire string of commands as fast as you want, drop the pad and watch your fighter complete the combo... no perfect timing here! I fear I could go on for pages about the intricacies of the fighting engine, but I'll save that for the review.

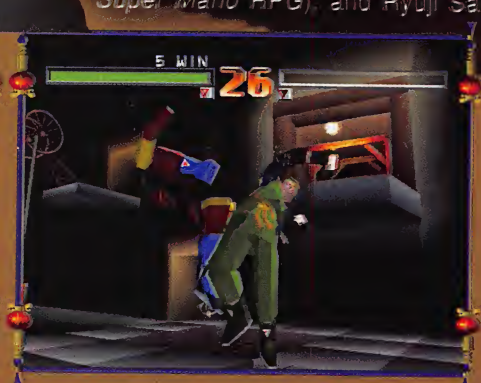
I don't care what anyone else says about the graphics, I





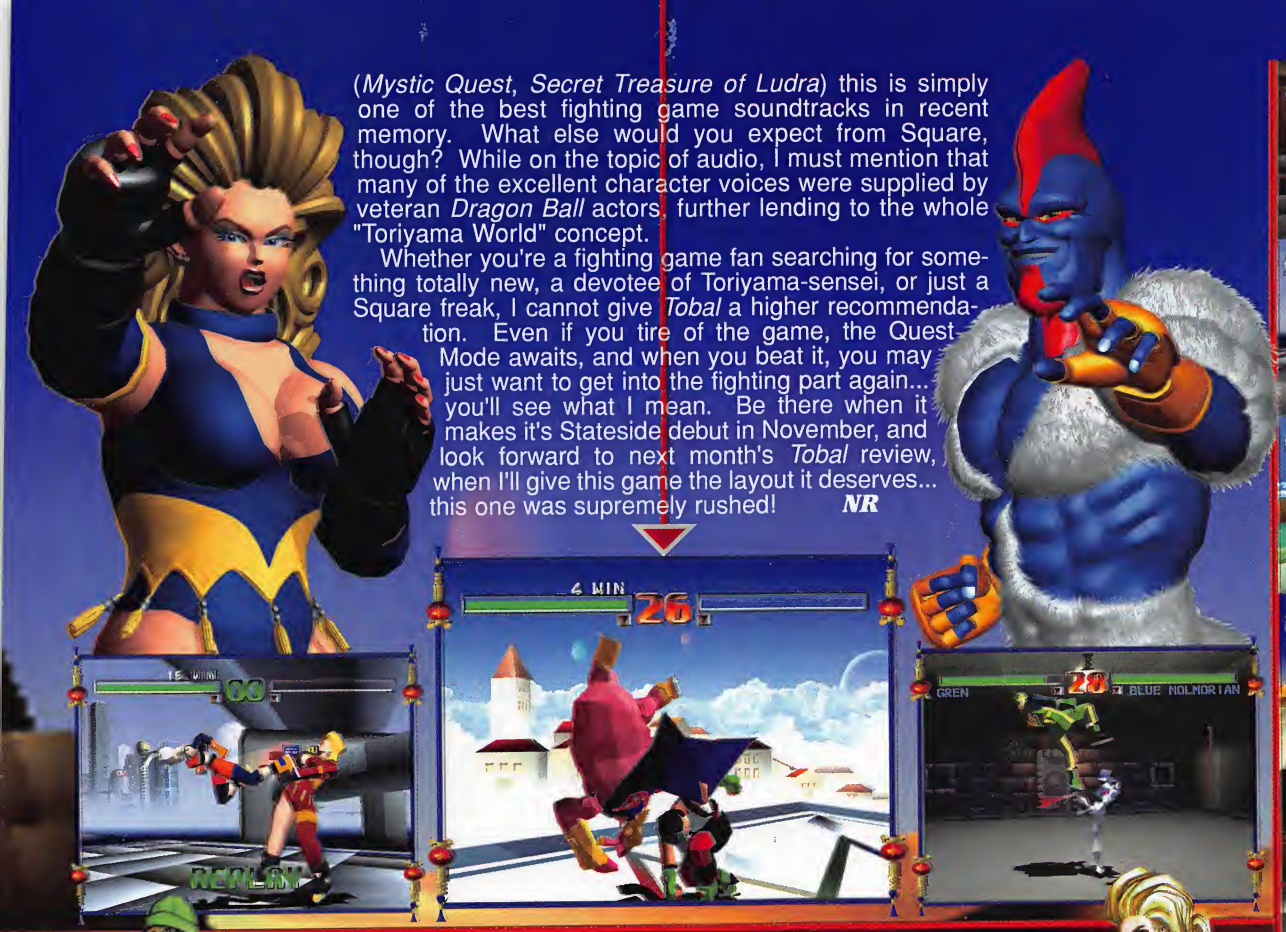
love 'em. It's incredibly refreshing to look at a game without any pixels, glimmer, mip-map blur, or any other haranguing traits of texture-mapping. These screens probably don't look like much to you right now, but when you see the game in motion, you'll be astounded. Not only are the characters fully motion-captured and moving in 60 fps, the resolution's so high your *teeth* will ache. Even *VF2* has nothing on this game's res – I honestly can't remember ever seeing a game, in the arcades or out, that looked like this. I know you're dumbstruck by my all-together too excited reaction to the visuals, but I can honestly say that this game's gouraud- and flat-shaded look is one of the greatest developments in video games in quite a while. Because the PS' calculatory abilities aren't bogged down with textures, Square's given us sickeningly detailed, sprawling stages that go practically as far as the eye can see, realistic attack motion-blurs, and lighting effects that must be seen to believed. The best part of having no textures, however, is... zero loading! None. Literally. There's less loading in this game than even *Tekken 2*. For all intents and purposes, *Tobal No.1* is a cartridge with screaming CD audio.

The BGM is utterly fantastic, matching the pace of the action and the locales perfectly. Overseen by *Chrono Trigger* maestro Yasunori Mitsuda and composed by, among others, such Square greats as Yoko Shimomura (*Front Mission*, *Super Mario RPG*), and Ryuji Sasai



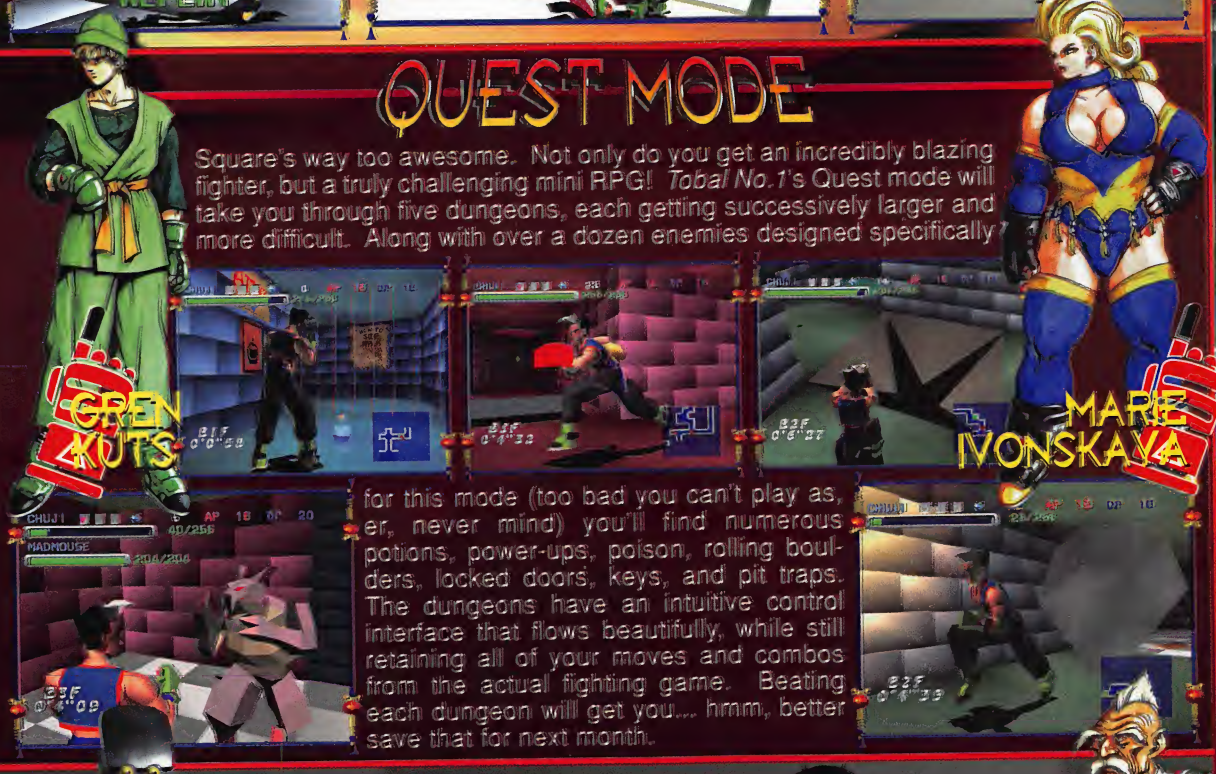
(*Mystic Quest*, *Secret Treasure of Ludra*) this is simply one of the best fighting game soundtracks in recent memory. What else would you expect from Square, though? While on the topic of audio, I must mention that many of the excellent character voices were supplied by veteran *Dragon Ball* actors, further lending to the whole "Toriyama World" concept.

Whether you're a fighting game fan searching for something totally new, a devotee of Toriyama-sensei, or just a Square freak, I cannot give *Tobal* a higher recommendation. Even if you tire of the game, the Quest Mode awaits, and when you beat it, you may just want to get into the fighting part again... you'll see what I mean. Be there when it makes it's Stateside debut in November, and look forward to next month's *Tobal* review, when I'll give this game the layout it deserves... this one was supremely rushed! ***NR***



QUEST MODE

Square's way too awesome. Not only do you get an incredibly blazing fighter, but a truly challenging mini RPG! *Tobal No.1*'s Quest mode will take you through five dungeons, each getting successively larger and more difficult. Along with over a dozen enemies designed specifically for this mode (too bad you can't play as, er, never mind) you'll find numerous potions, power-ups, poison, rolling boulders, locked doors, keys, and pit traps. The dungeons have an intuitive control interface that flows beautifully, while still retaining all of your moves and combos from the actual fighting game. Beating each dungeon will get you.... hmm, better save that for next month.



COMING NEXT ISSUE...

BOSSES!

Plus much more blazing Tobalness!

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

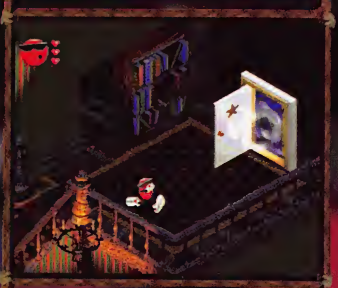
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

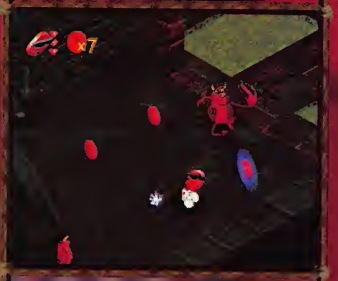
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

CHIEF HAMBLETON
AHHH, THAT'S THE SPOT!





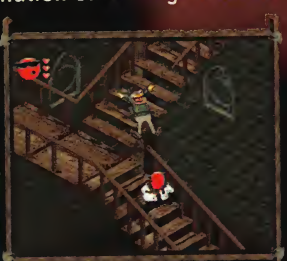
Gamers throughout the world have been waiting years for *Spot Goes to Hollywood*. It's delay has become legendary over the numerous months; in fact, all the youngsters here at GameFan regularly go round to Grandpappy Halverson's Games Den where he tells them of the day, many moons ago, where he actually heard of *Spot Goes To Hollywood*'s existence. Since then, nations have risen and fallen; the cycle of life has continued and then came the day... we secured a 70% complete version of *Spot Goes To Hollywood* and we trembled with anticipation. But is it any good?

At this stage of development, the isometric platform action looks very near 'spot-on' (ahem), but that's not what draws you in to the game. It's the FMV. I've witnessed cool introductions before, and this is exceptional; with a bubble descending from the Hollywood hills into a downtown Los Angeles cinema, complete with posters of various movies starring Spot himself (including a really cool Indiana Jones-style *Raiders of the Lost Ark* poster), before the bubble checks out the popcorn stand and ascends the stairs. Then it heads for a soda dispenser, you hear the trademark 'neep!' and out pops the blob in shades. Sneaking into the projection booth, Spot checks out the film camera a little too closely and gets sucked in, before being spewed forth onto a movie screen. Whoa!!

Once inside, Spot floats along the ocean on a reel of film before passing under a bridge adorned with a talking skull head. Bad move. He's sucked down from the sky into a pirate galleon... Adventure time!

Then the FMV stops and the game itself begins. This is where *SGTH* becomes the unique isometric platformer we've all been waiting for. Over 16 or so film settings, you'll jump, dodge, shoot, explore, and warp around scenes right out of a Hollywood production. From jurrassic parks to wild westerns, Spot just can't escape this perilous voy-

TRY AND COUNT ALL OF THE SPOTS IN THIS LAYOUT!!



age. As you progress further into the game, you discover just how difficult this title is, with precision jumps required to avoid spiky death and enemies that require multiple hits. You won't walk through Spot in the time it'd take to down a can of sparkling soda pop. The variety of the levels improves dramatically, with the engaging Spot descending into varied levels (an Inca temple, laboratory, the wild west and a space setting which is *exactly* the same as *Zaxxon*!) in his quest to escape.

Spot's goal isn't just to free himself from celluloid madness, as there's spots to collect, as well as Hollywood stars up for grabs. Sure, you can wander through the levels, but the real purpose of the game is to obtain all those stars before exiting, and this should keep anyone busy for hours at a time. At this stage of development, the action's a little choppy, with Spot requiring deft joypad wiggling to avoid a nasty bit of hurting, but the huge variety of levels and excellent FMV look fantastic. If the gameplay is successfully tweaked Spot could end up being the celebrated title we've expected. Isometric 3D, inherently, can get a tad confusing. Often, you'll jump for a cool spot and it'll be hanging much higher in the air than you thought (it's the same with tricky jumps). Look for the shadows rather than the objects themselves.

My initial playtest had me laughing, crying and gnashing my teeth throughout, as the sprawling levels, hidden bonus zones and cunning secrets ensured me this wouldn't be a quick hour or so journey. Platform freaks should be in seventh heaven when they play this baby, but for those who aren't fond of isometric games... well, we'll have to wait and see. As for Spot... he's still the coolest red button out there, and his struttin' animation still brings a smile to even my grim visage. Who knows; once we get our finished copy (next issue, perhaps), we'll finally be able to tell you whether the wait has been worth it. Stay tuned! ***CH***

SO DID YOU COUNT 52 SPOTS? TALK ABOUT SEEING SPOTS...

Destruction Derby 2

The wizards at Psygnosis, tucked away deep in their secret labs, are back it creating another litter of mind-blowing PS games. As sure as the seasons will change, Psygnosis will make games hot enough to last through them. Destruction Derby 2 looks positively awesome. This may look like full-on NASCAR action, but don't you think for one minute that major collisions don't ensue. DD2 is the perfect blend of arcade racing and mass destruction. We'll have more on this holiday release as it becomes available.

RATTLESNAKE RED

Here lies Acclaim's first in-house PS game, Rattlesnake Red. Bear in mind these shots were taken from a merely 25% version, so all is not final graphically. The character, for instance, in all his hootin' glory, has yet to be finalized. RR's gameplay relies heavily on 3D platform, that is when Red's not pluggin' scorpions and the like with his trusty six shooter. It'll be interesting to see how a western theme does in the growing genre of 3D action. Stay tuned for a thorcugh Rattlesnake Red preview in the November GF.

Viacom's *The Divide: Enemies Within*, set among vast polygonal environments, delivers a heavy dose of platforming as well as adventure gaming. As you progress in each area, you must locate power-ups enabling you to access new areas, much like Metroid. We'll give you a closer look in the November issue.

Ballblazer '85's Commodore 64/Atari hit, Ballblazer, is is looking mighty hot on the PS. This futuristic sports blaster will no doubt be as impossible to put down as its predecessor. BB debuts in January.

Can't get enough MTV? Well then check out their first licensed video game: Slamscape, from Viacom. In this slick lit-to-the-hilt futuristic blaster you squish and mash aliens that look like the baby from *It's Alive*. I can't say much more because we just got it. Stay tuned for a more in-our-depth preview next month. MTV's soundtrack is pretty funky.

Tenka

Set to do battle among the ranks of 3D gaming's elite, Psygnosis' *Tenka* looks and plays as good or better than anything in this toughest of tough categories. The boys at ID may even quiver for a second when they see this one.

Wipeout XL

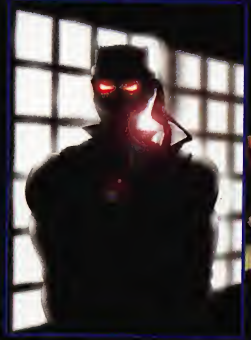
If a picture is worth a thousand words, these shots are worth a barge-load of simoleons. Wipeout XL will give new meaning to the words "couch potato" as millions of consoles will flick on simultaneously on its release day. Hot techno will blaze from every open window and if you stop playing for just a minute and listen really closely you might just hear the guy down the street doin' the same thing as you. Send the wife/girlfriend shopping and spend some quality time with this one. We'll have a big spread on WO XL next month.

SATURN SECTOR

P
PREVIEW

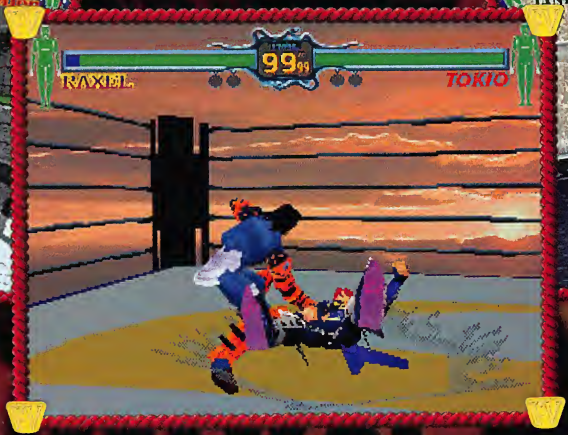
SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SOJ
PUBLISHER - SOA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



TAKUHI
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT GLAM ROCK WAS DEAD...

...HERE COMES AM2'S LATEST ARCADE TRANSLATION!!!



Ah, it's that time of year again, when the coolest kids from Armstone City come together to compete in the, um, "Nutcrack Tournament." Of course, in a city in which the "cool kids" include an 80's glam rock musician, a cos-player, a 14-year old skateboarder, a fat guy, a roller-blader, a gaudily dressed gang member and two androgynous freaks, I can't help but wonder what the *uncool* kids must look like. But, no matter. If we played fighting games for the story-lines, we'd be too busy analyzing the intricacies of *Way of the Warrior* to even think about *Fighting Vipers*.

Luckily, we live in a world of quality, a world in which the Saturn *Fighting Vipers* will have no problems fitting in. But before I get to the translation part, I'll quickly summarize the game for the few of you who don't happen to live near either of the arcades that actually have a real *Fighting Vipers* machine.

The game may look a bit like *Virtua Fighter*, and has the same button arrangement, but differs greatly in theory. Whereas *Virtua Fighter* has always been a technical, strategic fighter with an emphasis on balance and defensive techniques, *Fighting Vipers* is just a straight-for-the-neural-synapses beat-'em-up. Ugh, I hate referring to fighting games as "beat-'em-ups," it makes me sound like my father, or the LA Times. But, regardless, it fits for this one.

Not to say there's no strategy in *Fighting Vipers*. My point is that the intent behind this one was not to make a great technical fighter, but to enjoy the fundamental animal satisfaction of practically beating someone to death. Nothing beats the *Fighting Vipers* thrill of uppercutting someone against a wall, and then, before they land, hitting them with a final armor-breaking blow and smashing them straight through the same wall, and into a billboard a few yards behind that.

Unfortunately, the billboards (and various other objects that opponents can be hit into as part of the finishing moves) are gone in the Saturn version, but otherwise it's an excellent translation. The gouraud-shaded characters do an excellent job of mimicking the arcade's flat texture-mapped Vipers, and the backgrounds have a much more solid and less floaty feel than they did in *VF2*. The sound effects are nearly perfect, and the rings are actually made out of polygons, and break beautifully when you smash someone through them. Some of the background details had to be lost, of course, such as the airplane that was taking off in Tokio's stage, the shadows in Honey/Candy's, and the helicopter in Mahler's. I understand that these things simply aren't possible on the home versions, but I hope Sega can replace them with *something*, as those characters' stages seem so simple and lonely without them (especially Mahler's).

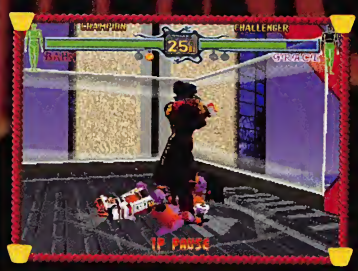
Fighting Vipers is still a month or two away from completion, so hopefully that one gripe will be addressed. Otherwise, AM2 fans have a lot to look forward on this one. ***T***

GRACE

AGE: 19
SEX: FEMALE
HEIGHT: 178 cm
WEIGHT: 58 kg
SPECIALTY: LEG COMBO

BAHN

AGE: 17
SEX: MALE
HEIGHT: 185 cm
WEIGHT: 88 kg
SPECIALTY: BIG STROKE



RAXEL

AGE: 18
SEX: MALE
HEIGHT: 177 cm
WEIGHT: 54 kg
SPECIALTY: GUITAR ATTACK

TOKIO

AGE: 16
SEX: MALE
HEIGHT: 175 cm
WEIGHT: 64 kg
SPECIALTY: SPIN KICK COMBO

SANMAN

AGE: ??
SEX: MALE
HEIGHT: 180 cm
WEIGHT: 132 kg
SPECIALTY: BODILY CRUSH

JANE

AGE: 18
SEX: FEMALE
HEIGHT: 168 cm
WEIGHT: 69 kg
SPECIALTY: PUNCH COMBO

Candy

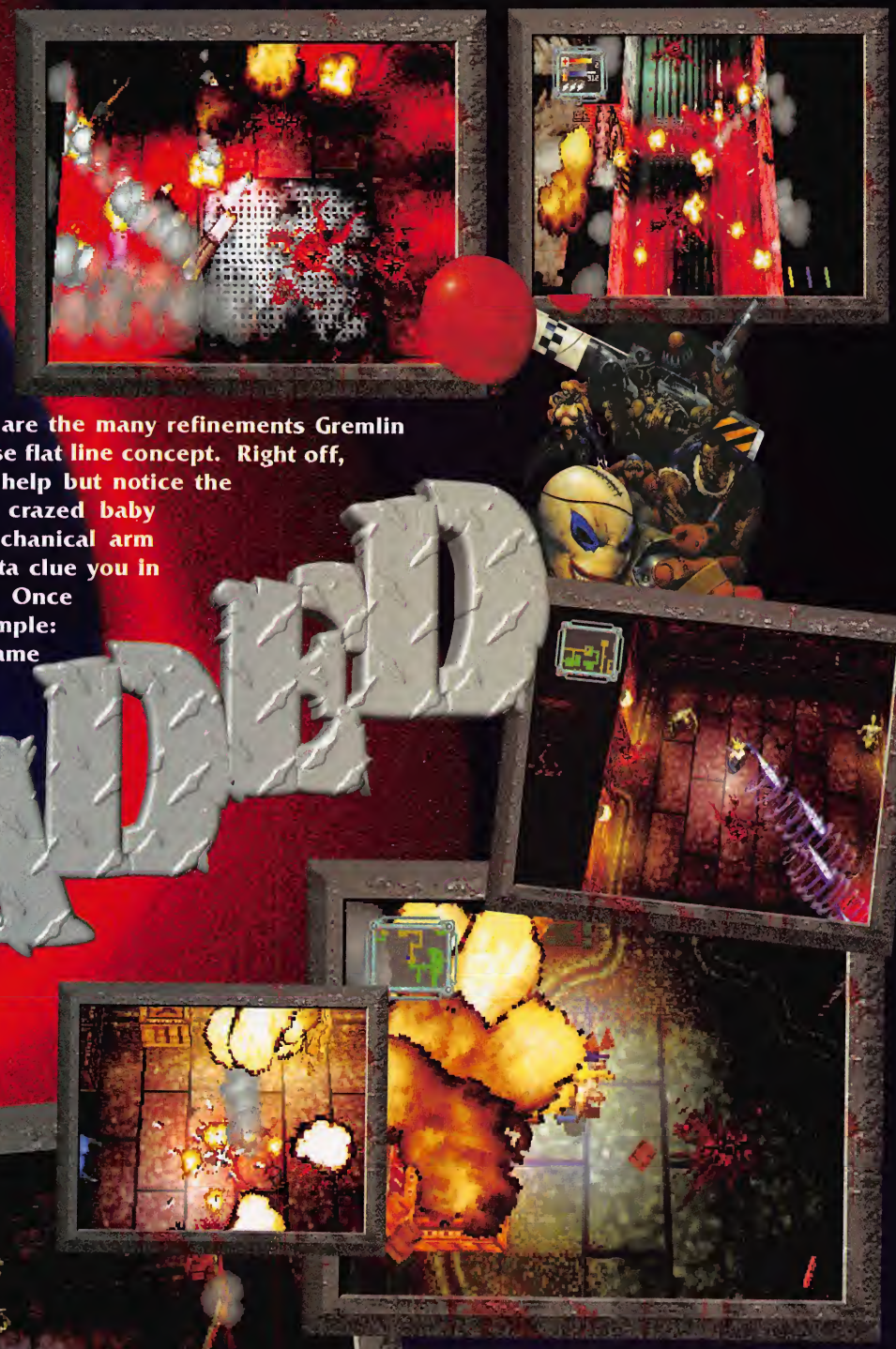
AGE: 16
SEX: FEMALE
HEIGHT: 159 cm
WEIGHT: SECRET
SPECIALTY: CAT PUNCH

PICKY

AGE: 14
SEX: MALE
HEIGHT: 162 cm
WEIGHT: 50 kg
SPECIALTY: SKATEBOARD ATTACK

LOADED

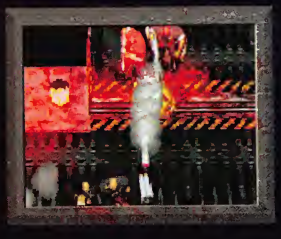
After a blazing rendition of Wipeout, what more could a Saturn user ask for than a near perfect version of Loaded? Indeed, with all the press that surrounded this title of juicy red carnage back in '95 I'm sure that the Saturn set often wondered what the big deal was. At a glance, Loaded looks like nothing more than a top view shooter laced with enough crackling explosions and blood to make your mama cry. Essentially, that's what Loaded is. What makes it the celebrated title it has become are the many refinements Gremlin have so kindly added to this otherwise flat line concept. Right off, while touring the options one can't help but notice the allure of the characters. Mama, a crazed baby huey in soiled diapers sports a mechanical arm with a bazooka attached. That oughta clue you in right off as to where you're going. Once play commences, the object seems simple: find the colored keys to match the same colored doors and proceed there, on the double. The prison colony is spinning madly out of control and you want out! A few problems however, are in your midst. As if finding the keys among the dark and dank surroundings isn't hard enough, there are hordes and hordes of enemies. Blue from lack of sun, zombies want to eat you, angered to the degree of madness, guards want to fill you full of holes, and if they don't get you, the oversized rats (who've been stuffing their stomachs with the food the prisoners won't eat) or the heavy machinery scattered throughout prison will. The key to survival is locating and then conserving weapon power-ups and medical supplies. Waste these precious commodities and all the shootin' you

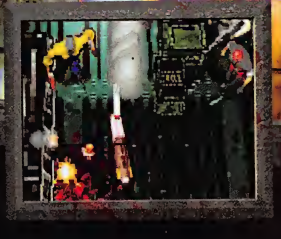


can squeeze out won't save you. A weak weapon means little to these bloodthirsty inhabitants, and it'll take pounds of led to put 'em down. A healthy weapon, on the other hand, will strip their skin from their bones in a heart beat, one final heart beat, that is. Besides all this lovely action, one should make sure to stop and realize that what looks like pretty hot light sourcing is happening all around, something Saturn folk aren't accustomed to. Gremlin has done a splendid job porting Loaded to the Saturn. The music, a grinding mash of techno with a couple of screws loose, is along for the ride as well and, although it may grow tiresome at times, for the most part it fits the on-screen mayhem very well.

So there you have it, my final editorial on Loaded. I've played preview after preview and review after review now on two platforms and I still enjoy this crazy game. It's nothing overly complex, nor is it unique, save the graphics and hot lighting. But once in awhile it's still nice to just kick back and fire away, and I can't think of a better way to do just that than with Loaded... 'cept maybe with Reloaded...

ES





REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - GREMLIN

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

E. STORM

A HOT BURNIN' TRANSLATION IF I EVER SAW ONE!

STREET RACER

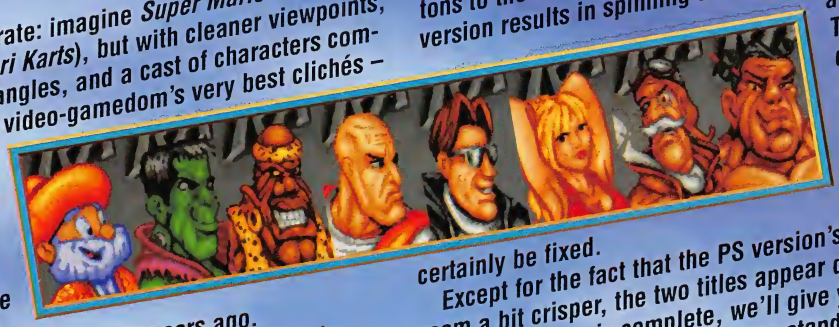
PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - VIVID IMAGE
PUBLISHER - UBISOFT
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-8
DIFFICULTY - EASY
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

EVIL LIGHTS
PUSHING *ATARI KARTS* FURTHER INTO THE FUTURE...

UbiSoft and Vivid Image are preparing the release of the Saturn version of their new kart racing title *Street Racer*. In case you missed our PS preview, I'll reiterate: imagine *Super Mario Kart* (or, for the purist, *Atari Karts*), but with cleaner viewpoints, multiple camera angles, and a cast of characters comprised of some of video-gamedom's very best clichés – there you have *Street Racer*. And, as mentioned in the PS preview, *SR* is based on the game of the same name that appeared on SNES so many years ago.



It seems a little out of the ordinary for UbiSoft to choose a revival of *Street Racer*, but why not? If I remember correctly, they did a good job with the first one, and in our current era there hasn't really been anything else like it – that is, a cartoony "fun" racing game – except for *Motor Toon*; but even that title wasn't racing in the go-cart sense.

Saturn *Street Racer* seems to be progressing nicely alongside its PS counterpart. Of course all of the absurd characters are included here, each with his/her own individual course packed with details. The big difference between the two is the control; other than the shift in techniques being executed from L and R buttons to the X-Y-Z row, turning your cart on the Saturn version results in spinning the course and background at high speeds. This is only a distinguishing factor for the time being though, and will almost certainly be fixed.

Except for the fact that the PS version's graphics seem a bit crisper, the two titles appear quite similar. Once this project is complete, we'll give you an in-depth look at why *Street Racer* may stand out a bit more prominently from the pack of "real-life" racing games on the next-gen systems.

EL

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - PERFECT ENT.

PUBLISHER - WILLIAMS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

GLITCH

IN-YOUR-FACE 3D!

Aliens have decided to invade again, (like we haven't had enough of alien invaders this summer) and it's up to you turn 'em in to a pile of festering goo. *Area 51* revolves around an expertly trained troop of mercs called STAAR – Special Tactical Advanced Alien Response. This should be a moment for *M.U.S.H.A.* trivia (come on, what *does* it stand for?!), but instead I'll move on to the preview.

As a member of STAAR (a.k.a. Metallic Uniframe Sup... Naah, why spoil it?), you've been enlisted to infiltrate the *Area 51* complex, a top secret UFO research lab. As we all know, having a "top secret UFO research lab" usually spells trouble for the government at one point or another, so you've been sent in to neutralize the current alien threat. The base is at risk of being victim of a full blown hostile takeover by the evil mothership and eliminating the alien forces depends on your highly trained skills.

Apparently *Area 51* was ranked #1 by *Replay* for eight months after its original release, so I take it there's quite a few fans anxious to see the Williams port-over to home consoles and PC. The non-stop, in-your-face, 3D action contains all the arcade levels and secrets, and Williams went the extra mile by including additional secret rooms exclusive to the home versions. Everything else will be arcade true: the cool stop-motion animated characters, neato backgrounds, and the fully interactive (you can blow holes in 'em) levels. The Saturn version uses the Stunner, so don't worry about muddy control pad hijinx. We're waiting on a final version, so I'll be back as soon as possible with a full review. *G*

BATTLE MONSTERS

Many months ago, amidst the Saturn's import launch, I went berserk over Naxat's *Battle Monsters* to the bewilderment of the whole of the GameFan staff. Why, they would ask me, did you do six pages on this game? Well, allow me to explain... or try to at least. In the first place, at that time, I was not into fighters, but rather still resisted them, hoping that developers would soon tire of them and get back to the *Castlevanias* and *Ghouls and Ghosts* of the world.

This not only has not, but likely will not, ever happen. So, I began to play the various choice fighters here at GF: *SF Alpha*, *Alpha 2*, *KOF '95*, *Tekken 1&2*, and recently, *Tobal #1* and *Fighting Vipers*, which so far, I like the most. I now know that *BM* is, in no way, shape or form, a hard-core fighter (well, in all honesty, I knew that then). You certainly won't be doing any combos or juggling. In fact, should you choose, you can pretty much spend each round avoiding your opponent. So, suffice it to say, hard-core fight fans will likely not embrace *Battle Monsters*. A year ago, when Saturn titles were scarce, they may have, just for the novelty of it all, but Acclaim has let a year pass in bringing it over.

Now for the howevers... However, I for one still think that *BM* is pretty cool... in a comedically evil sort of way. The gameplay, though not conventional, can be entertaining, with 12 moves plus a super for each ghoul. And while the digitized graphics don't impress me as much as they did a year ago, they are still representative of the monsters they surround. The music and voice is creepy cool, too. So if you're looking for something a little different, or prefer a little platform-laden, ghoulish mayhem in your fighting diet then give *Battle Monsters* a look. It's an interesting twist on the hottest category going, and... it's Halloween! ***ES***

E. STORM
FROM UNDER THE BED THEY COME TO DO BATTLE ON YOUR SATURN!

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - NAXAT
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - N/A
AVAILABLE - NOW

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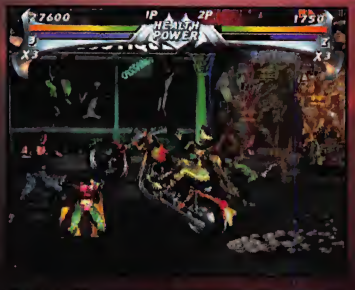
AVKGF

BATMAN FOREVER ARCADE

Here's just what the Saturn needs, a full blown, action packed, good ol' fashioned arcade style side scrolling action romp... with x-tra testosterone! Acclaim/Iguana's on it, programming like fiends, just for you! BMA is lookin' good and coming this Fall!

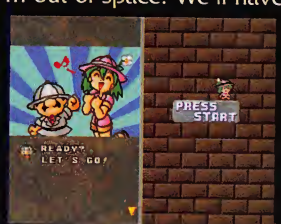


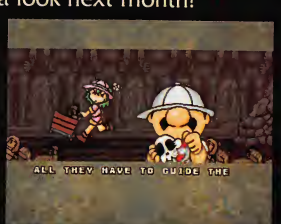
CRIMEWAVE

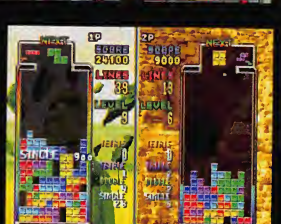
Domark's Crimewave marks the first Saturn overhead driving/shooter... and it's a good one! Using their rotational 3D isometric viewing system CW features 8 rendered vehicles, highly detailed battle zones, a vast supply of destructive weaponry, and super-addictive gameplay. Eight battle zones consisting of beautifully texture mapped polygons make it look great and the ace designers at Domark will undoubtedly make it play great. We'll have an in depth preview in the November GameFan.

TETRIS ATTACK

I'm out of space! We'll have a look next month!







TOMB RAIDER

Here's a look at the unique "Gym" level from Tomb Raider, Core/Eidos' newest and greatest creation. This game, I'm tellin' ya', is going to be absolutely spectacular. Lara uses the Gym (well actually you use Lara using the Gym), to get acquainted with her many moves. It seems every time we see our mates at Core they've added something new to her repertoire. Tomb Raider will hit first on the Saturn this October and shortly thereafter PS owners will get theirs. The game will consist of four massive areas; an involved CG storyline/movie is being produced and will feature enough hidden secrets and mind-blowing platform/adventure to keep even the most die-hard adventurer glued to the telly till the cows come home. Look for a big TR roll-out in the November issue.

MAJOR DAMAGE

Capcom's Major Damage, due out this Fall, features SGI rendered lil' plastic bad dudes among some of the most impressive and clean rendered environments you've ever seen. The action is fast and frantic with every inch of the playfield being utilized as the hero of Retro City swings in to action, thwarting crime and inadvertently keeping construction workers employed (by creating major damage). Tommy Tallarico's tunes are especially inspired in this one, evoking the games retro mood. Look for more on Major Damage very soon.

As in America, the PlayStation is doing extremely well in Japan. After three brief weeks of Nintendo 64 dominance, the PlayStation is once again outselling the Nintendo 64 and Saturn by a ratio of 5 (PS):4 (N64):2 (Saturn). Though the Japanese PS was never really able to seize the arcade gamer crowd away from Sega, the Japanese 'Station's excellent assortment of quality games, from *Tekken 2* to *Aquanaut's Holiday* to *Bio Hazard* [*Resident Evil*] to the promise of *Final Fantasy*, has ensured it a wide demographic base of support in its homeland. Now, finally, some of the more original and innovative of these titles are on their way stateside, as Sony Computer Entertainment of America has embarked upon an aggressive campaign to bring the best of these quality Japanese titles here.

At the end of July, the fine folks at Sony Computer Entertainment flew a number of gaming media representatives out to Japan to meet the father of the PlayStation, find out about a number of these previously obscure 3rd party projects, and test out a ton of hot PS titles that are on the way to American shores. As GameFan's pick, I visited the warm and hospitable folks at Sony Computer Entertainment, Sony Music Entertainment, Artdink, Namco, SNK and Square, and came back with a suitcase full of shots, demos, art and information from a dozen or so of the hottest PlayStation imports destined for American translation...

-Takuhi

Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.

Motor Toon GP 2

Sony was showing three of their best first-party titles: *Motor Toon GP 2*, *Epidemic*, and *Kowloon's Gate*.

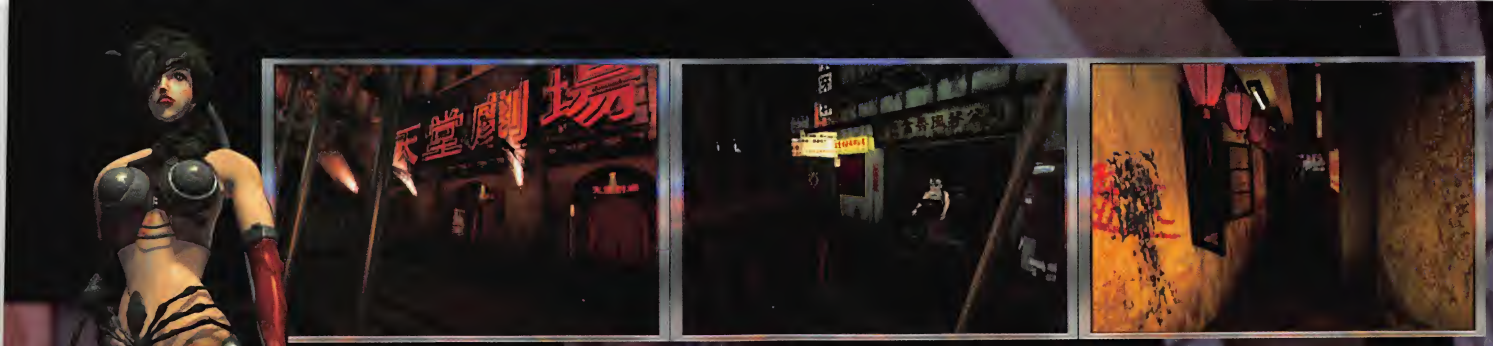
We've covered *Motor Toon 2* in minute detail in Volume 4, Issue 8, and Sony is definitely making the right move by taking a chance on this charming title. There will be no significant changes in the American version, and Sony's even considering packing in the second disc for link-up play that was a free bonus for Japanese gamers.

Epidemic is the American title for *Kileak: the Blood 2* (covered last in Volume 4, Issue 3), a *Doom*-style game that emphasizes puzzle-solving over more traditional shooting action. The game is liberally sprinkled with amazing full screen CG cinemas, and the play mechanics are vastly improved over the clunky but well-meaning original.

Finally, we got a chance to see *Kowloon's Gate*, an FMV adventure similar to Saturn's *Torico* (last issue), but with 4 discs of crystal-clear, full screen FMV. The storyline's definitely a bit out there, mixing ancient Chinese legends with contemporary fears over Hong Kong's return to mainland China's control. The setting is an equally bizarre mix of Hong Kong's Kowloon slum and futurist cyberpunk technology that all comes together beautifully. You'd really have to see it in motion to get some idea of the brilliantly creative deviance put into this one's hours of interactive video... I asked what experience the director had had, and the answer was "TV commercials." I simply cannot fathom how someone could go from shampoo and dog food to something as amazing as this.

Anyway, the game also has real-time 3D dungeons and an RPG-like random encounter battle system, in which you fight your battles by choosing from Chinese/Japanese kanji. That Sony of America actually intends to translate a game that not only has 200 characters, 72 voiceovers, and inherently Asian content permeating down to its battle system, says a great deal about the strength of their commitment to translate the best of the Japanese PlayStation games.

Epidemic



Kowloon's Gate

Ken Kutaragi, Father of the PlayStation

Ken Kutaragi, Executive Vice President of SCE's R&D (and the man who headed the PlayStation design team), was kind enough to spare a few hours to speak with us about the PlayStation's past, present, and future. A few highlights:

• Mr. Kutaragi considers *Tobal #1* to be the best showcase of the PlayStation's power, but asserts that we still have not yet seen the system's full abilities. However, we might be seeing it soon. The source code for the PlayStation hardware was released in May of this year, so ambitious companies can now program in PlayStation assembly code. The first games exploiting the PlayStation's raw power through assembly language should start popping up early next year.

• Mr. Kutaragi wasn't too impressed with the Nintendo64, and pointed to *Pilotwings'* slow frame rate as evidence of a weakness in the hardware. Of course, "no one, including me, knows the system's power," he added, and said he was looking forward to the first N64 racing and 3D fighting games as a benchmark for comparison.

• There is currently no RAM upgrade planned for the PlayStation (as there is for the Saturn), although Mr. Kutaragi acknowledged that RAM insufficiencies are a constant problem. Sony fears confusion with too many development environments, but asserts that this decision is "certainly not final," and the problem is still being worked on.

• What's next for the PlayStation? Sony's next major hardware project (or as Mr. Kutaragi referred to it, the "next PlayStation presence") will probably happen early in the next century (so you'll definitely want to hold onto those PlayStations for a while). Though plans are, of course, still vague this early on, Mr. Kutaragi's goals sound very intriguing. Polygon count is "only one parameter," of a system's performance, he says, and even a system as beautiful as Sega's arcade Model 3 has characters that move like "mannequins." "[Current] graphics quality is not sufficient for a natural environment." His goal is hardware with "synthesized characters and synthesized human behavior." I don't know quite what that means, but whatever it may be, it sounds *very* revolutionary.

Namco

Namco Museum

The complete line-up of Namco museum titles has been unveiled... Two comments: Where's *Splatterhouse*? And where's *Bravoman*? Otherwise, there's some good stuff coming up, including many never-before-seen in the US classics like action-RPG *Legend of the Valkyrie*, *Fatal-Labyrinth*-esque dungeon quest *Tower of Druaga*, and *Return of Ishtar*, its *Quartet*-like sequel. Some of the later museums also have amazingly well-done real time bonus scenes in the various rooms of the museums. They're all coming here, of course, but release dates are still undetermined.

(continued next page)

A touch of the surreal invades Namco's corporate offices: a near-perfect replica of the Namco Museum check-in desk. Nice .

Volume 1:	Volume 2:	Volume 3:	Volume 4:	Volume 5:
• Pac-Man	• Xevious	• Galaxian	• Pac-Land	• Motocross
• Galaga	• Mappy	• Ms. Pac-Man	• Assault	• Legend of the Valkyrie
• Pole Position	• Cutey-Q	• Dig Dug	• Ordyne	• Pac Mania
• Rally-X	• Gaplas	• Pole Position II	• Samurai Ghost	• Dragon Spirit
• Bosconian	• Grobuder	• Phozon	• Return of Ishtar	• Baraduke
• Toy Pop	• Dragon Buster	• Tower of Druaga		

Namco (continued from previous page)

Soul Edge (arcade version)

No game company has been as integral to the PlayStation's success as Namco. They published five of the system's top 10 best-selling games (*Tekken 2* at #1, *Ridge Racer Revolution* at #2, *Tekken* at #4, *Ridge Racer* at #6, and *Ace Combat* at #7), and *Tekken 2* just became the system's first million seller (as of July, 1.1 million and still counting).

Their next top 10 title will no doubt be *Soul Edge*. It seems to be yet another 100% perfect translation from the PlayStation hardware-based arcade version, with all the bonus goodies that graced the home version of *Tekken 2*. So look forward to some luscious CG intros (it's about 2 minutes long, they said, but we didn't get to see it) and endings, a choice of original and arranged soundtracks, and a bunch of cool new modes. The game will be based on Version 2 of the coin-op (with a new combo system, juggles, and tweaked balance), and the only difference beyond that that I saw was the addition of waves in the raft scene. At least one more addition is planned: Namco's having a contest where its Japanese fans can send in their costume ideas for the characters, and the winners' ideas will appear in the game as special "3P colors." Very cool.

Their next arcade translation will be *Time Crisis*, Namco's first system-22 game. No word on the translation quality yet, but Namco has announced that they are making their own light gun for it. It won't have the recoil of the arcade one, nor the pedal (a button on the gun will probably replace it), but Namco claims it will be 10 times more accurate than Konami's version. Namco's carnival shooting game, *Point Blank* (referred to in previous issues by its Japanese name, *Gun Bullet*) is also planned for release.

Finally, they have a new racing game coming, which doesn't have a title yet. Even though the Japanese working title is *New Ridge Racer*, we were told it won't be a *Ridge Racer* game at all, but a new racing game in the spirit of *Ridge Racer*. We don't have any other details on this one, but speculation is centering on a December 3rd release date (in Japan), as that was the day when both the original *Ridge Racer* and *Ridge Racer Revolution* were released.

And, just for the curious, *Tekken 3* is still shrouded in secrecy, but should be unveiled at the September Japanese arcade show. Namco wouldn't say what hardware it runs on, but they did say that the jump from 2 to 3 will be "much greater" than the jump from 1 to 2.

Time Crisis (arcade version)

Point Blank (arcade version)

SNK

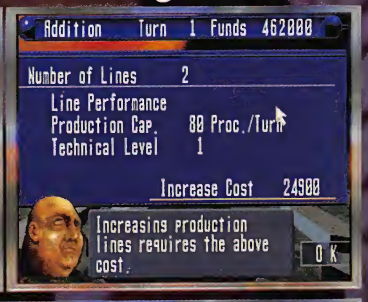
SNK is a 3rd party to both the Saturn and PlayStation in Japan, but Sony is the first to snap up some of their titles for domestic release. *King of Fighters '95* and *Samurai Shodown III* will both be exclusive to the PlayStation for at least 3 months before the Saturn versions hit (if they hit at all), making the PS the clear system of choice for 2D fighting game fans.

King of Fighters '95 will be out as early as September, and is a very impressive translation. Although it doesn't have an attached ROM cartridge, all the character animation and voices are intact, as is the arranged soundtrack from the Neo•CD version. The only sacrifices are brief

 Soul Edge Artwork © Namco 1996

ArtDink

Carnage Heart



Tail of the Sun

ArtDink is most famous for a few PC series, *A-Train* (which came out here) and *Lunatic Dawn* (which did not). But now they've turned their attention to the PlayStation, and Sony is hoping to spread their Japanese reputation as makers of quirky, intelligent, incredibly original titles to American shores.

It's definitely a reputation they deserve. In the area of their sales literature marked "target user," where most companies fill in something like "males age 12-20," ArtDink writes in "broad-minded people." And thanks to Sony's broad-minds, we'll soon be playing such exotic fare as *Tail of the Sun* and *Carnage Heart* (*Aquanaut's Holiday*, ArtDink's first title, is already available in the US).

We featured Tail of the Sun in volume 4, issue 7, but in case you missed it, it's one of the weirdest, most hilarious games ever created. You play one of a number of cavemen, running around doing things cavemen do, like beating up cute animals, sleeping, and evolving. *Carnage Heart* is a different matter entirely. It's a hardcore military simulation where you not only customize the hardware for your war machines, but the *software* as well. Through trial and error, you strive to program the most advanced war machines possible. These can then be manufactured en masse to fight in the on-disk strategy game, or exported via your memory card to fight with your friends' creations. It sounds complicated, and it is. But it's also one of the most mind-expandingly brilliant ideas I've ever seen in a game. We'll have a lot more on this one next month.

loading pauses when you change characters within the fight, and the loss of a few frames of background animation. The PlayStation version also allows you to change damage parameters (thank god!), assign special moves to the L&R buttons, and has a bunch of other exclusive options.

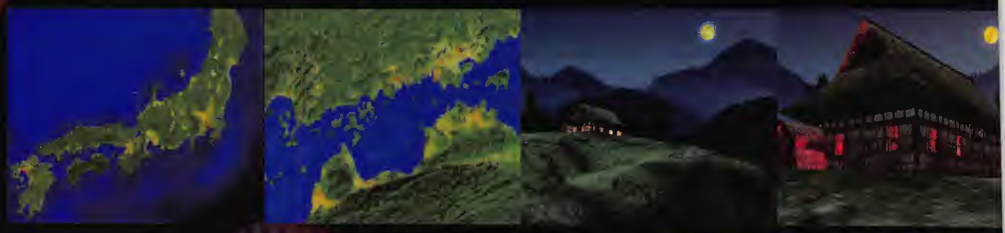
A few months after that, we'll be seeing *Samurai Shodown III* on the PlayStation. This title isn't even out in Japan yet, and I was a bit worried over stories of animation being cut. Fortunately, the game was beautiful. A few frames may have been missing (and the sound samples are currently a bit off), but the animation was still exquis-

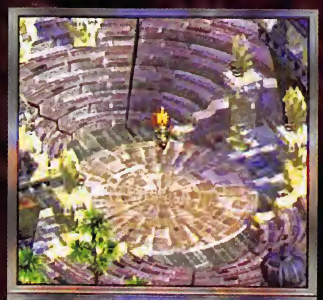
(continued next page)

King of Fighters '95

SQUARE

In addition to *Final Fantasy* and *Tobal #1* (which can be found elsewhere in this issue), Square unveiled their next four PlayStation games. These titles have no scheduled American release, but can be seen on the demo disc that accompanies the Japanese version of *Tobal #1*.





Sa•Ga Frontier

First, the *Sa•Ga* logo was given to a trilogy of original Gameboy RPGs. Then, to the Super Famicom *Romancing Sa•Ga* trilogy. Now, the PlayStation will have its own *Sa•Ga* series, *Sa•Ga Frontier*.

It takes place in the futuristic kingdom of Legion, and features the same selection of 10 or so characters that was available in the *Romancing Sa•Ga* series. Except this time, in response to customer criticism, Square will allow you to control them all at once, and try to solve each one's individual quest in your one large adventure. There are four new character types, including humans, machines, faeries, and monsters.

The graphics are pre-rendered, but in a very different style from *Final Fantasy VII*'s. The battles are 2D, and have some interesting concepts, such as the ability to attack the enemies in pre-determined "teams" of characters.

Most of the key developers are from the *Romancing Sa•Ga* team, including Producer Akitoshi Kawazu, Musician Kenji Ito, and Character Designer Tomomi Kobayashi, but many other key members are actually from the *Seiken Densetsu* (*Secret of Mana*) team. It's a bold new direction for the *Sa•Ga* series, and let's hope that, unlike *Romancing Sa•Ga*, this series actually comes out in America.

Samurai Shodown III

(Neo•Geo version)

SNK *(continued from previous page)*

ite, and the backgrounds have been recreated perfectly, right down to the alternate versions of them that appear in a near death 3rd-round fight. If SNK or Sony adds in an option to downscale the amounts of damage done (the original's only big flaw), this could be even better than the original.

And a few asides: Sony is considering releasing the PlayStation version of the *Samurai Shodown RPG* (definitely a good call), and it seems that *King of Fighters '96* is headed to the PlayStation (at least in Japan) despite the fact that it hasn't been formally announced yet.

Samurai Shodown 3D coming for SNK's 64-bit arcade hardware!

SNK's 64-bit machine is nearing completion! We were also shown a tape (no photos allowed) of the long-rumored successor to the Neo•Geo. SNK's 64-bit hardware will probably be unveiled at Japan's September arcade trade show, and may be released in arcades by the end of the year. Four games are currently in the works, two fighting, one shooting, and one racing.

The hardware specs aren't finalized yet, but when asked, SNK expressed a continuing commitment to 2D games, and proclaimed that the system would have both 2D and 3D capabilities far beyond those of the Neo•Geo.

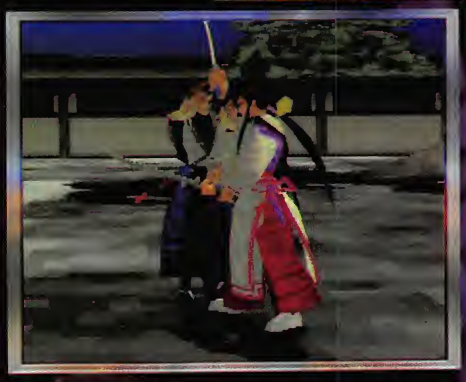
The tape showed people hard at work rendering a 3D *Samurai Shodown* game, and we were shown a rendered Japanese style mansion, and three rendered characters: the two mortal enemy *Samurai Shodown* main characters Haohmaru and Genjuro, and, strangely enough, Poppy (Galford's dog). The renders look incredible, and SNK has martial artists acting out their moves in SNK's new motion-capture studio.

Oh, and SNK's next major release for the16-bit Neo? *Samurai Shodown IV*, due out by year's end.

Finally, SNK pulled out *King of Fighters '96* for us to play. It should be out by the time you read this, but just in case you've missed it, I'll give you the rundown. Seven new playable characters, two new bosses, major changes for some of the old characters, and new systems aplenty. The changes in this one far exceed the changes from '94 to '95, and the game looks and plays beautifully. Hopefully we can get our hands on a copy by next issue.

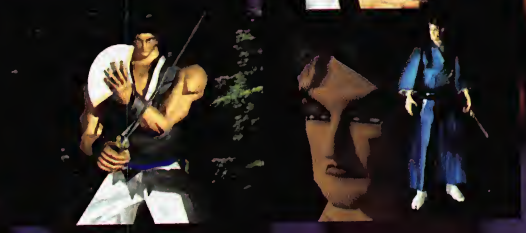
Another new Square 3D fighter, by another new development team. "Light Weight" is doing the honors on *Bushido Blade*, and is creating a very unusual samurai-style 3D fighter that features realistic sword combat, free of any time limits and life bars.

The concept sounds weird... You can kill your opponent in one shot, 1 second into the round, or spar with them for 30 minutes without being hit. The stages are huge, with lakes, forest, and buildings to hide behind, and all the characters use the same type of weapon, but in subtly different ways.



Zauber

And finally, *Zauber*. Square has released no information on this strange-looking strategy/shooting game, save for the theme, which is "Light and Darkness." Um, thanks. Your guess is as good as mine.



Bushido Blade

Final Fantasy Tactics

By far the cream of the crop, *Final Fantasy Tactics* looks and sounds amazing. Though the Quest label is nowhere to be found on this one, the game was made by virtually the entire nine-man Quest development team that was responsible for *Ogre Battle* and *Tactics Ogre* (and, mysteriously enough, cute TurboGrafx shooter *Magical Chase*). The team includes *Ogre* Designer Yasumi Matsuno, incredibly talented *Ogre* Artist Akihiko Yoshida, *Final Fantasy* Producer Hironobu Sakaguchi, and beyond brilliant *Ogre* Musicians Hitoshi Sakimoto and Masaharu Iwata. The music on the 10 second demo is, by the way, the greatest 10 second music track in the history of the universe. The *Final Fantasy* theme song blends into the *Tactics Ogre* theme song, and it's just... divine.

Anyway, the game is set up like *Tactics Ogre*, but all of the maps are only 16x16 squares (it must have a larger overhead map or something), and are made entirely of polygons. Mr. Sakaguchi said that the characters would all be *Final Fantasy* characters, but by this I think he means to say that the black magicians will all have silly hats and two yellow eyes, not that you'll actually be playing as Cecil and Gau. It does, however, feature Bahamut, Chocobos, and various *Final Fantasy* enemies.

The character classes include Black Mages (the spell you see in the pics is indeed Meteo), White Mages, Knights, Apprentice Knights, Chocobo-mounted Apprentice Knights, Samurai, Dancers, and a bizarre new class of mages called something like "Calculaticians." As in, numbers and stuff. The art on this page is of the game's two main characters, hero Ramuza and heroine Ovelia. More on this one as it nears is 1997 Japanese release.

FINAL FANTASY VII

It's finally here... Well, it's not. But it's closer. And this time, I've *tasted* it. I've seen the beautiful rendered graphics, heard Nobuo Uematsu's awesome soundtrack, controlled the rendered characters, summoned... [dramatic pause] Leviathan. Ah, Leviathan. Yes, I've played the Square demo disc (packed in with the Japanese *Tobal No. 1*), and I'll probably come to regret it. *Final Fantasy VII* is still four months away (as of this writing) in Japan, and god-only-knows how many away in the US. I probably should be prudent about this... Shouldn't play the demo disc, shouldn't look at the stack of luscious renders Square just sent over. Shouldn't even think about it. But it's too late for me. Like any addict, the thought of restraining myself, patiently awaiting the final, didn't even cross my mind until it was much, much too late. There's still time for you, though. Flip straight to page 120. Try not to look directly at the beautiful render on the left. Go on. You'll thank me.

Still here? I figured as much. They didn't believe Nancy Reagan either.

The truth is, *Final Fantasy VII* is going to be phenomenal. Square put more time into the 15 minute long demo game than most companies put into their entire games. And going by Producer Hironobu Sakaguchi's estimation of 40 hours of gameplay time (Mr. Sakaguchi estimated the same amount for *Final Fantasy VI*, a figure that proved to be pretty much on target), I've seen less than 1% of the finished product.

Final Fantasy VII has the perfect balance of everything. Square went way overboard on the computer graphics, creating one astounding rendered environment after another. But they haven't let their quest to make the most technologically advanced RPG yet interfere with the fundamentals of *Final Fantasy*. The music is exactly the quality you'd expect out of *Final Fantasy*, Tetsuya Nomura's character designs are looking every bit as good as *FF I-VI* Character Designer Yoshitaka Amano's masterpieces, and the storyline appears to be the boldest one yet. FMV? Amazing. Loading time? Not a problem.

A few pieces are missing, but Mr. Sakaguchi has informed us that that's only temporary. Despite the seemingly episodic nature of the version on the demo disc, we've been assured that *FFVII* will feature a truly non-linear quest, complete with a go-anywhere overhead map, rendered this time around with real-time polygons. And what about the battles? They currently seems a tad sparse, with only 3 characters, and the new "Limit" attacks being the only addition to the basic *FF I-IV* battle system. Will *FFVII* have a battle system as intricate and strategic as *FFV*'s job system, and *FFVI*'s accessory system? "Absolutely," responds Mr. Sakaguchi, "just as intricate [as *FF 5&6*] if not more." The new battle system was simply removed from the demo version... It's a surprise that won't be unveiled for a few months yet.

So, what's missing? If I had to make one complaint (and I do, it's in my nature) it would be that the cinematic

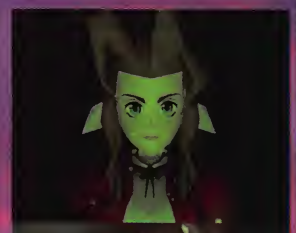
(continued next page)

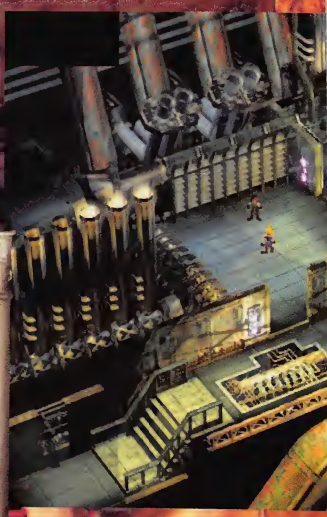
(continued from previous page)

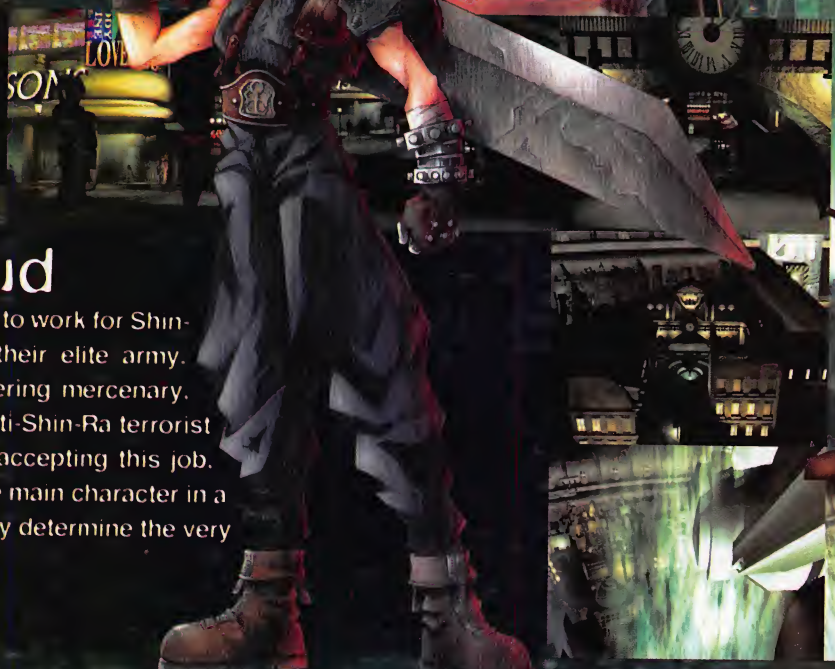
nature of the battles currently makes them take a bit too long. Other than that, I'm hard pressed to find any potential faults... Give the world's most talented RPG company a development staff that numbers well into the three digits, a budget that exceeds the GNP of some 3rd world countries, and 1500 megabytes of storage space to play with, and what *could* go wrong? The only problem may be in the 1500 meg area... Evidently they're having trouble keeping the game at just two CDs, and might have to make it 3. God forbid!

Square's only problem now is the perennial concern of how to sell (what will be) *Final Fantasy IV* in America. Square is convinced (as are all of us at GameFan) that there's "much more potential for RPG games in the US market." My explanation for the genre's apparent lack of popularity is that nobody ever actually *releases* good RPGs here, but a number of marketing people have assured me that it's much more complex than that. Whatever. But one thing's for sure: If *any* game is capable of countering this mysterious, malevolent force that is evidently stopping Americans from buying RPGs, it's *Final Fantasy VII*. -Takuhi

The demo disc version: All the images on this page are from the *Tobal*-packed demo disc, and this is only a fraction of the locales you'll visit in this brief quest. By the way, it's not yet certain whether Square will bring out *Final Fantasy IV* under their own label, or license it to Sony like they did for *Tobal No. 1*, but both parties seem interested in releasing the demo disc here. If an agreement can be reached in time, it may actually be packed in with the American *Tobal*... I've also heard talk of distributing it through direct mail campaigns and such. Sounds like a good idea to me!







Cloud

21-year old Cloud used to work for Shin-Ra, as a member of their elite army. Now he's just a wandering mercenary, under the employ of anti-Shin-Ra terrorist group Avalanche. By accepting this job, he's cast himself as the main character in a battle that will ultimately determine the very fate of his planet.

The story thus far:

"The Shin-Ra corporation controls not only the world's power supply, but its governments as well. Some of this world's discontents have formed the Avalanche organization to fight back at the Shin-Ra corporation via terrorist tactics.

"At a bar, Cloud came into contact with Avalanche, and was paid a large sum of money to join the organization on a sabotage mission.

"Their target: Shin-Ra's power generator, 'Makoro.'"

In addition to that, there are a few interesting storyline tidbits to be found in the demo disc's three or four conversation scenes. One of my favorite aspects of *FFVII*'s story is the fact that Cloud is actually kind of a jerk... When the friendly Avalanche members try to introduce themselves, he cuts them off and tells them that, quite frankly, he just doesn't care. When Bullet tries to tell him how Makoro is sucking the life blood out of their star, a process that will eventually kill it, Cloud responds that he just wants to get his money and get out of there. It should be very interesting to see how his character evolves...

An *FF* in which the villain is a corporation? You've got to admit that's pretty cool. But what does Shin-Ra mean? Well, the first character means "God..." So far, so good. And the second means... um... silk. Not just silk, but light, gauzy silk. Hmm. Well, at least it looks cool.

Bullet

The 35-year old leader of the Avalanche. He lost his wife in an accident some years ago. and is currently living with a woman named Marin. plotting his resistance to Shin-Ra.

Battle System

So far, there aren't too many surprises in the new battle system. Every character in the demo disc version has the same options (no jump attacks, or stealing or anything), and everyone can cast a couple of spells. Aerith can summon Leviathan.

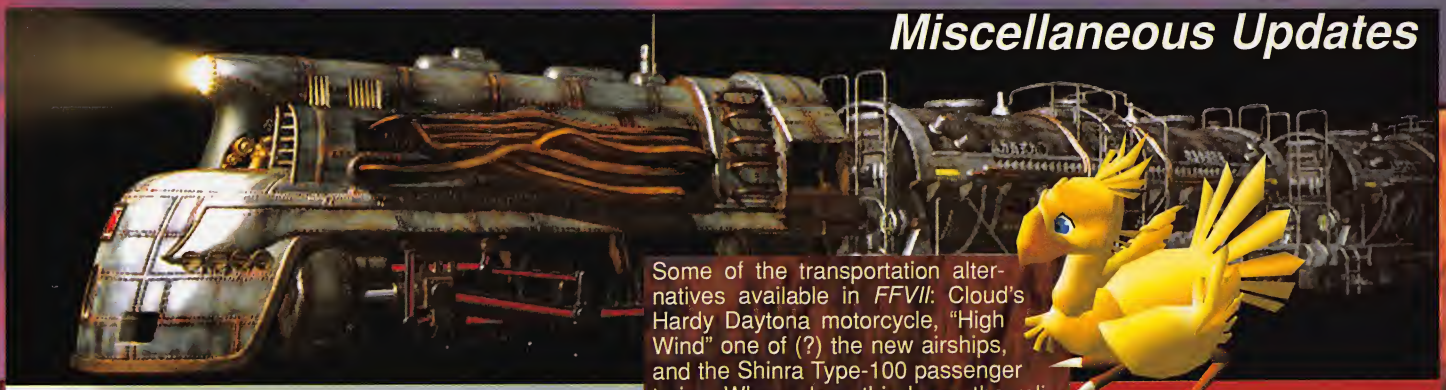
One change is that you can no longer target all enemies with your basic attack spells. To attack all, you evidently need the spell to be at a certain level, which is denoted by a red diamond next to the spell name.

The biggest change is the "Limit" bar. As you fight, it gradually fills, becoming full after 8-10 battles. You can then do a "limit attack," which is a choice of a couple of techniques that do extra damage (in the case of Cloud and Bullet) without using any MP. Aerith's limit attack heals everyone in the party.

Aerith

A beautiful 22-year old with a mysterious air about her. She runs Midgar's flower shop [funny, I don't recall seeing any flowers in Midgar...], but after meeting Cloud in a chance encounter, she ends up playing a major role in his quest. The literature we received from Square goes on to hint at a love triangle between her, Cloud, and Tifa. That would be a Final Fantasy first...

Miscellaneous Updates



Some of the transportation alternatives available in *FFVII*: Cloud's Hardy Daytona motorcycle, "High Wind" one of (?) the new airships, and the Shinra Type-100 passenger train. Where does this leave the reliable, sporty, yet fuel-efficient Chocobo of *Final Fantasy* lore? Who knows?

These are the actual renders of High Wind, as it will appear in the game. Pretty amazing... But what's more intriguing is the background in the bottom shots. Is that the aforementioned polygon world map? I bet it is...

I Met Nobuo Uematsu!

And what a nice guy he was, taking time out of his busy day to shake hands and pose for pictures when a bunch of star-struck magazine editors suddenly invaded his office.

If you didn't know (shame!) Mr. Uematsu is the composer for the *Final Fantasy* series. His work in *FFVII* (all PCM, there are no redbook tracks) is of typically excellent quality, standard *Final Fantasy* tuneage with a slightly harsher, more mechanical feel to reflect *FFVII*'s sci-fi environment. And finally, there are multiple battle musics.

"How many tracks are you writing for *FFVII*?" I asked. Mr. Uematsu thought a minute, then responded "About a hundred more." A hundred *more*.

Final Fantasy Rumors

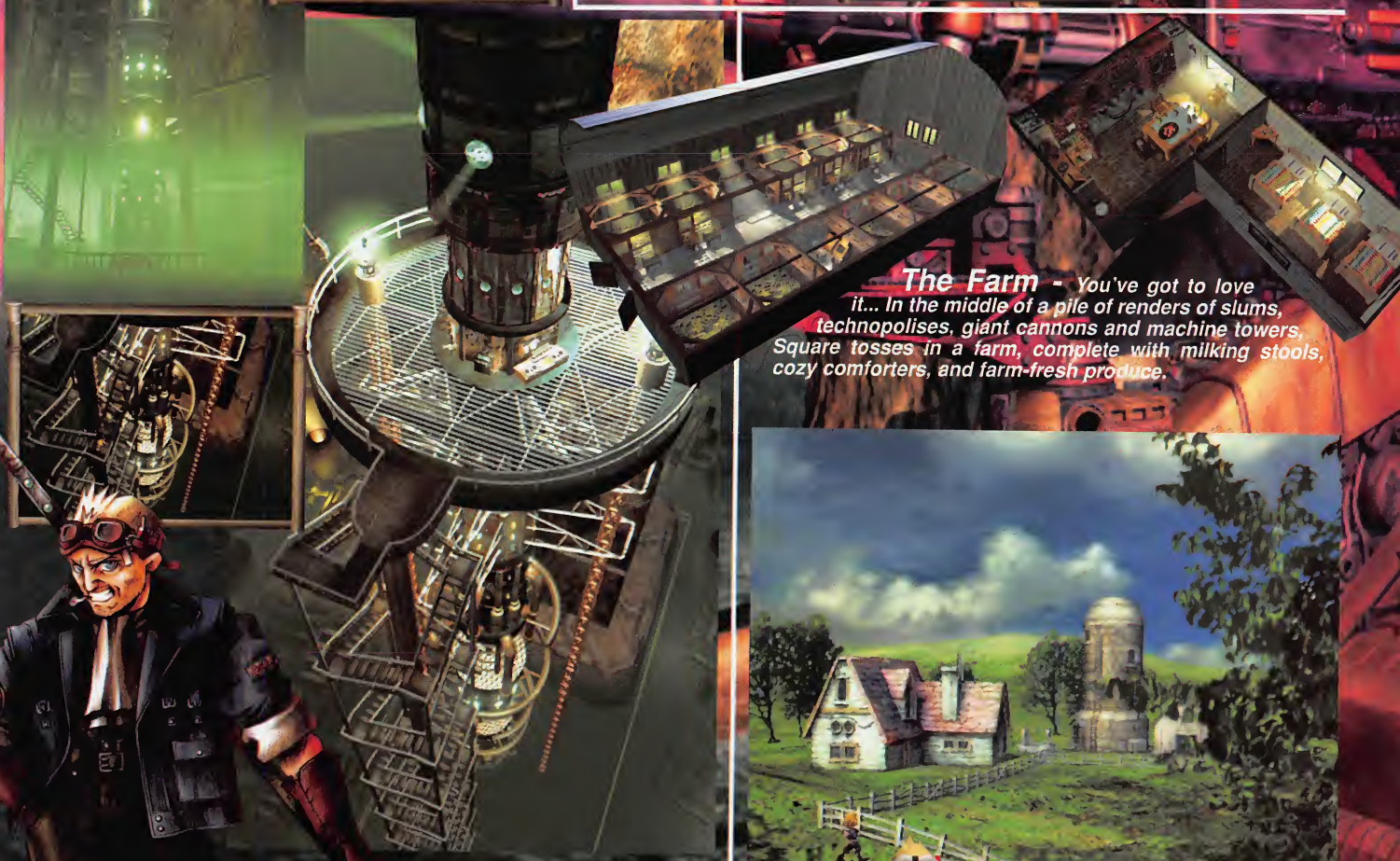
Last time, I reported on the rumor that Square is remaking *Final Fantasy I-III* (the Famicom versions) on the PlayStation. Well, I got a chance to ask Mr. Sakaguchi, and his answer was an emphatic no. "We want to move forwards, not backwards." Too bad...

Red XIII

This mysterious creature is actually a party member. Not much is known about Red XIII (Square hasn't even released its gender), but despite its beastly appearances, Red XIII's intelligence actually far exceeds that of a normal human. Other than that, he/she's still a mystery.

The Machine Tower

The Church



The Farm - *You've got to love it... In the middle of a pile of renders of slums, technopolises, giant cannons and machine towers, Square tosses in a farm, complete with milking stools, cozy comforters, and farm-fresh produce.*

Cid

As true FF fans know, Cid is the only character to appear in every Final Fantasy, but only rarely as a playable character. Although much younger than most of the previous Cids (he's only 32), this Cid carries on their traditions of kind-hearted gruffness, mechanical aptitude, and exploratory spirit. A master with vehicles, this Cid's goal is to travel the stars...

FINAL F

Junon - *What is it? Why do they need such a big gun? What's in all those doors? Why do the banners clearly say "Rufus?" Could this be the other side of the hillside town we showed last month?*

Ice Cave

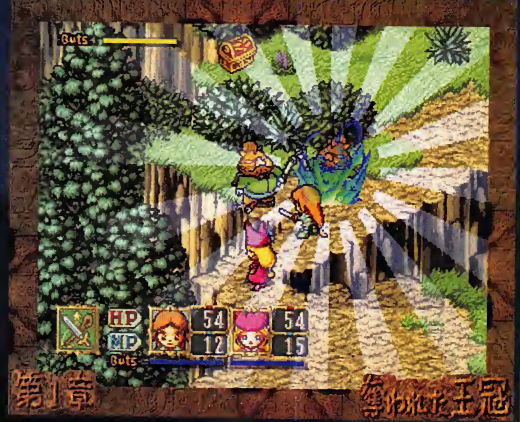
Slums - *This doesn't look so bad. They have electricity. They have the Midgar equivalant of CNN. They have cool ruins to play in.*

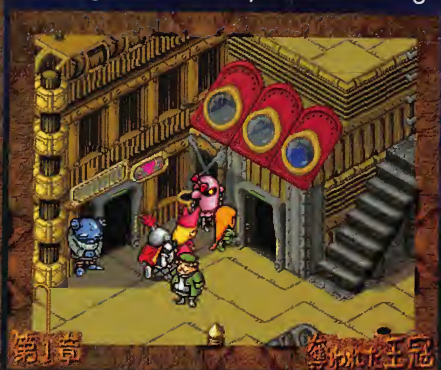
Tifa

The second newly announced character is Tifa, a brave, good-natured 20-year old beauty. Despite her cute face, she fights only with her bare fists, and is a master of the Kakutoh [Blitz] technique that Mash [Sabin] used in FF VII [III]. She is a key member of Avalanche, and a childhood friend of Cloud's. Although she pretends otherwise, she does harbor certain feelings towards Cloud.

PoPoLo

Ah, the plight of the hand drawn RPG. Now that its native 8 and 16-bit environments have been completely clear-cut, the once proud genre is forced to adapt to the harsh polygon-based ecosystems of today's 16 and 32-bit systems. I doubted it would survive the year, but, alas, it's the price we pay for progress. Surprisingly, *Popolocrois* is another welcome piece of evidence, along with *Genso Suikoden* and the *Arc the Lad* series, that this endangered species has managed to cut out a living even on the polygon-packed PlayStation, and actually thrive. Though it's definitely too soon to take the hand-drawn RPG off the endangered list, *Popolocrois* brings with it the glimmer of hope that we may see the day when flocks of proud, majestic, hand-drawn RPGs once again roam our, um, import game stores.





Popolocrois may look like a *Landstalker*-esque action-adventure, but it's actually a pure RPG, more reminiscent of recent Square titles like *Chrono Trigger* and *Treasure Hunter G* than anything else. There are some elements that are definitely reminiscent of *Landstalker*, though, such as the lack of a *Final Fantasy*-style overhead map. Every major location of the

POPOLOCROIS

game is connected by fields, swamps or hills that will have to be traversed on foot (you can teleport between towns, though). The graphics are also richly reminiscent of *Landstalker*. The game has the same isometric perspective, full of pristinely beautiful graphics, but unmarred by any of that beloved Genesis title's frustrating jumping scenes.

Instead, *Popolocrois* has a long and charming quest, charting the adventures of 10-year old prince Pietro and Narcia, the equally young witch-girl who acts as Pietro's pre-pubescent love interest. Although I'm firmly against this trend of declining ages in RPG heroes (The *Treasure Hunter G* characters were, what, 6 years old?), it's hard not to take a liking to these two well-animated

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - G-ARTISTS

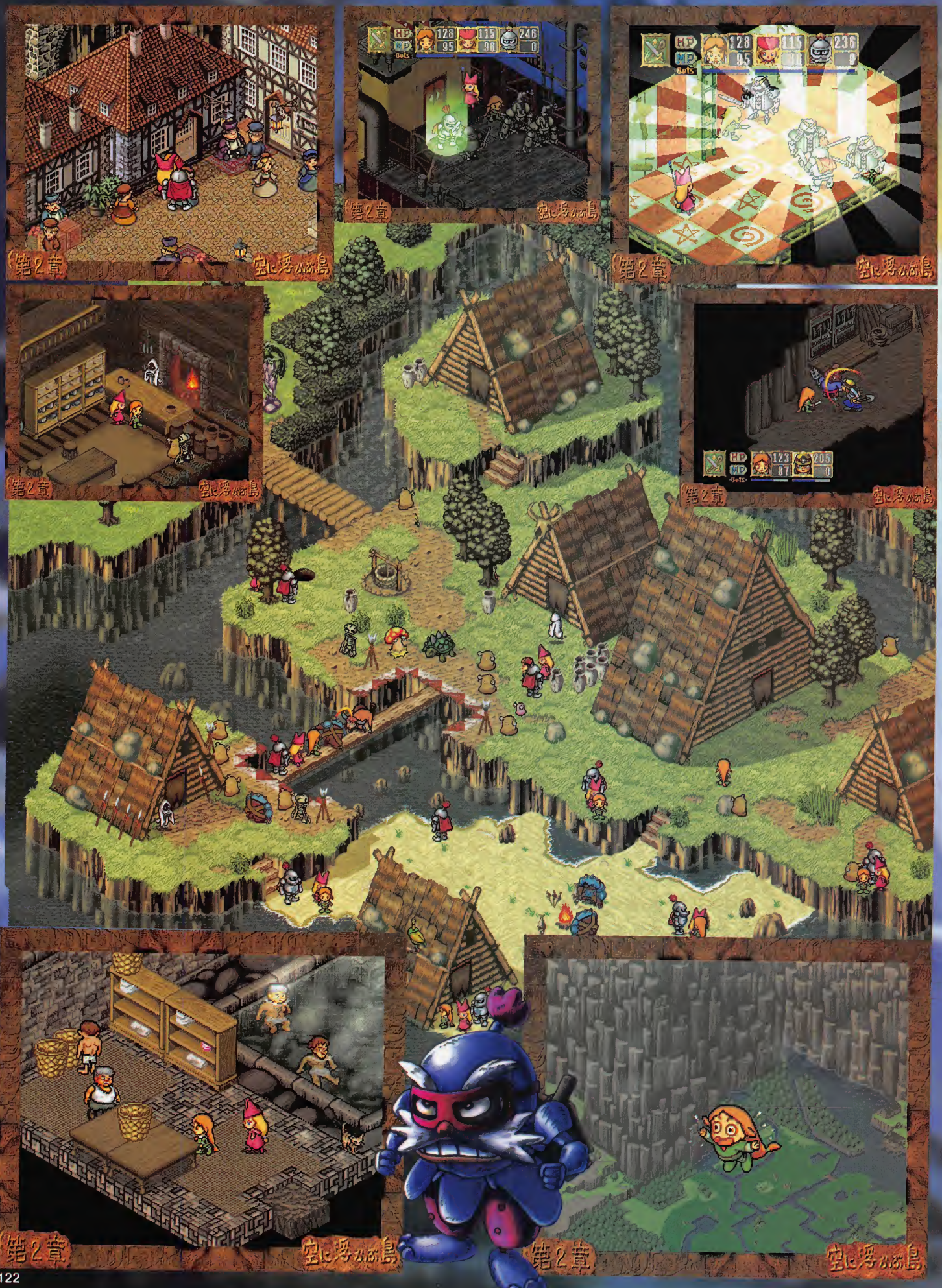
PUBLISHER - SCE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW-JAPAN


第2章
空に浮かぶ島
HP
MP
Bolts

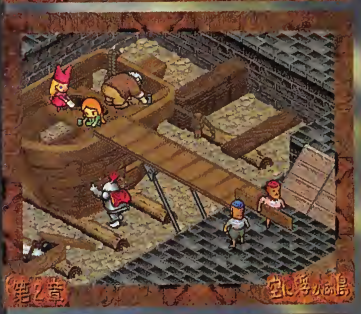
cuties. Together with a small handful of allies, they must take on the sadly incompetent Demon King Gamigami in chapter after chapter of heroic quests.

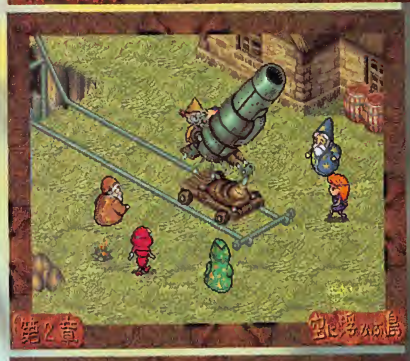
The basic storyline isn't anything special, but the game's full of cool plot twists and memorable settings, once again reminding me of a high-quality Square title. The game also manages a great sense of humor, never taking itself too seriously, but also never getting so silly that it weakens the impact of the quest. And even though you're controlling a pack of toddlers, don't assume this game is aimed at kids. Difficult and well-designed dungeons keep the level of difficulty well above average.

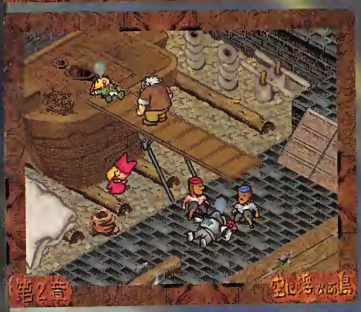
I have two complaints with Popolocrois. Its most obvious failing is the music... It's all pretty good, but each track is about 10 seconds long, and just loops *ad nauseum*. I did appreciate the variety in battle music, though. My second complaint is the battle scenes. Though they're pretty well done (like *Chrono Trigger*'s, but much faster paced), there are just too many of them. It's not a problem to the extent it was in *Beyond the Beyond*, but it will get annoying.

Those aside, I can definitely recommend *Popolocrois* to any and all RPG fans. G-Artists' team of 16 graphic designers put a ton of time into this one, making sure each city, dungeon, and area has its own style and mood, and even the lowliest townsperson is lusciously animated. Come on, Sony, you know this one *has* to come out here...

T







GAMEFAN SPORTS

Chip

Jacques Strap

CHIP'S CORNER

Well, the Olympic Games have come and gone (long gone by the time you read this) and I have to say that while I do come away proud to be an American (save the beast who rocked the joint), I also come away feeling as if I was so over-sold on the whole thing that my big screen needs a pair of ear plugs,a band-aid, and a week's vacation, unplugged. The commercials weren't so bad, except for that freakin' *Geooooooorgia* jingle that's stuck in my head. But the actual network kind of over-sold the whole affair. I was as proud as anyone when our little (and I do mean *Willow* little) gymnast vaulted on a bad ankle. But after a week of watching the network milk the moment, I was ready for a straight jacket and a sack of *Oreos*. I also didn't like the fact that only the US's triumphant moments were celebrated. Many other countries were represented, and with America being a place so diverse in nationalities I thought it slightly bogus not to show some non-US shining moments. "*Well another day has gone by and the Americans still lead the medal count*" ... "*Just look at all that gold, Bryant. Hey, let's show that vault again...*" My last complaint is in regards to the judging. How does one find that many blind people that know about sports? Oh well, for the most part it was a really good show. My congratulations go out to all the winners and la-hooo-sa-hers. Now... it's time for Football season! Yee-ha! Butt marks on the sofa comin' up! A great crop of hot Football games will be available throughout this season making it a banner year. Of course I'll be more likely to bring my team of polygonal Chargers to the Super Bowl than watch the real thing. But that's OK. Isn't it nice to know that if the game sucks you can always fire up the console.

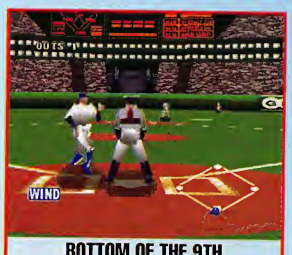
This year I'm ready. I went out and bought one of those DSS Satellite contraptions. I've now got a dish bolted on to the side of the house which receives four times as many redundant cable channels! I hope the NFL package makes it all worth while otherwise I'll end up servin' chili in it. Well, that's it for now. I have vented and maybe even struck on some valid points. But I doubt it. *-Chip*

VIEWPOINT

"Chip"

I can't watch a baseball game but enjoy the digital sort quite a bit. *Bottom of the Ninth* (and I know you're gonna hate me for this) plays better on the Saturn. Maybe it just seems that way because there's less competition, but that's how I see it. Nicely modeled and animated characters and a cool engine make this a super fun game. It's well produced and I like it!

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	8	8	7	80



BOTTOM OF THE 9TH
SATURN
KONAMI

"Jacques Strap"

With the MLBPA license, cracking homers with my favorites is fun stuff indeed. On-screen, everything's as smooth as a ballpark hot dog, with easy to read info, nice scrolling, and excellent gouraud-shaded poly-players. I still don't know if I'm down with Konami's infamous batter's box aiming square, but I'll live with it . Special mention goes to the fantastic commentator and stadium/crowd fx – I'd swear they're real!

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	8	9	8	88

One of the best football engines to date! *NFL QBC* plays really, really well. From play calling to running, to passing, the AI in '97 is dead on the money. The traditional sprites may not animate quite as well as the motion-capped ones elsewhere but they look and react a whole lot better. Iguana's done just enough to this sequel, dressing it up nicely for its '97 Saturn debut. A must buy for serious fans.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	9	7	na	90

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '97
SATURN
IGUANA/ACCLAIM

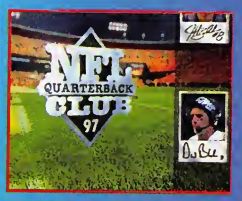
My trusty football companion is back for '97. Both NFL licenses are on board, and loads of new faces have entered the *Club*. The 3D engine has been slightly tweaked, so the camera sweeps and pans are much smoother than last year. The "create-a-cam" feature is the coolest! Put that camera ANYWHERE you want! Like I said, I always count on *QBC* for solid play, great options, and high re-play value, and this year is no different.

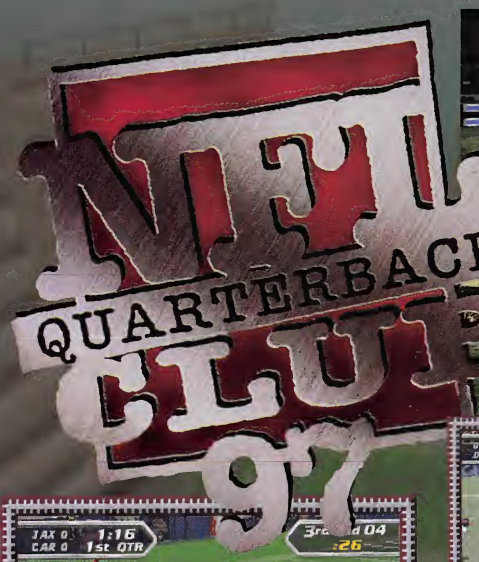
G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	9	7	na	90

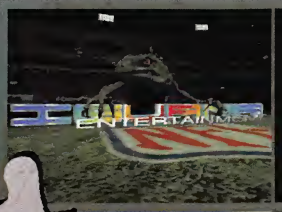
GameFan Sports Preview

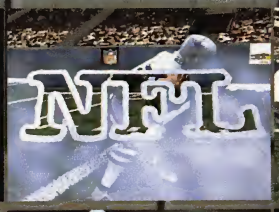
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '97

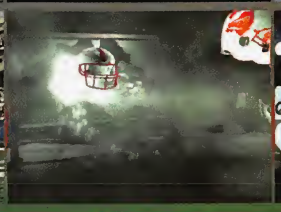
The PlayStation version of *QBC'97* is trailing the Saturn version in its production, so we're waiting for the November issue to handle the review. What I can tell you, of our approx. 75% copy, is to expect the Saturn and PlayStation versions to look remarkably similar to one another. We were told by the developers that the PS version might benefit from the smallest of improvements in its 3D movement, but otherwise be a carbon copy. I noticed no differences myself, except for the cleaner FMV intro we've all come to expect of the PS. All the NFL licenses are here, the load of options, and the hot play mechanics. I noticed the multiplayer mode offered less players (the Saturn's 12 to the PS' 8), and the loading was a second faster, but I'll hang on 'til a final rolls in to tell you more. Either way, Saturn and PlayStation owners are getting a great football game this season.

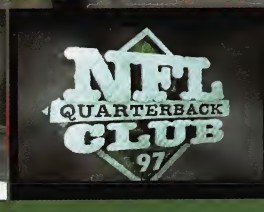












GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - IGUANA
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-12
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

The '97 sports updates keep rollin' in! I love seeing my favorites returning for another year, and *Quarterback Club* is thankfully among them. Competition will be fierce for the 32-bit football crown this season, with tweaked game engines, look ma! features, and more big names. I like nothing more than a soft couch, a bag of snacks and a good Football game. Heck, I don't even have to train. But then I don't have an annual salary equal to the deficit either.

As the name implies, the *Quarterback Club* football series has always included some big-time NFL quarterbacks. With many, many new signings for '97, and up to the minute roster additions, expect to see all of the recently traded QBs on their proper teams. Names like Kordell Stewart, Dave Brown, and Jeff Blake, are all in their actual current teams and positions. All the NFL organizations, even the Ravens, Jaguars, and Panthers, with real life rosters, are here for the picking.

Greeted by a fantastic opening CG cinema, and followed by extremely user-friendly Play, Quick Play, and Simulation options, getting into *QBC'97* is enjoyable and effortless. The main game options include Weather adjustment, Field type, Penalty levels, and Stadium selection. While there are only four stadiums to choose from, each comes complete with banners and flags representing the home team in play, as well as end zone and mid-field insignia paint. Getting on to field is as easy as choosing pre-season, regular season, play-offs, or Pro Bowl game modes. This ensures a wide selection of gameplay possibilities for practice games, play-off sessions, or season-long campaigns. In all modes, your games are categorically charted to keep track of all statistics. Lastly, a Trade option is available, so creating and developing that dream team you've always wanted is now entirely possible.

Thankfully, the *QBC* graphics engine hasn't been upgraded in any major ways, nor have the play-mechanics. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, my Grandpappy used to say. The field scrolling is smooth, with loads of cams to choose from, and quick movement. The players are still traditional sprites, which means we get nicely rounded and animated players with that classic feel. Close-ups are still, unfortunately, a touch pixelly but that's inherent of the hardware. *QBC'97* also supplies the jersey numbers on every single player, so keeping track of them in the midst of a play is actually possible. The play mechanics have remained basically unchanged from last year. There's more plays, tighter control, and a few new moves on defense, but nothing overly ambitious. That's fine by me, though, as long as it happens as well as it does in *QBC'97*.

Iguana and Acclaim have found a formula that works, surrounded it with excellent options, and have come away with another winner. It's good to know that when everything else can be questionable is this genre, there's always a good game of football to be found in *Quarterback Club*. ***JS***

JACQUES STRAP
HEY BOOMER, YA GOT SOMETHIN' STUCK IN YOUR TEETH... MY FREAKIN' HELMET!

PREVIEW

Andretti RACING

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - STORM FRONT

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

CHIP
YOU SHOULD SEE ME HANDLE A GOLF-CART!

The PlayStation, being the system of choice for racing games, seems the perfect home for none other than Mario himself. No, I'm not talking about *that* Mario... Mario Andretti! Hey, they *are* both Italian. In the past couple of months, I've seen arcade racers, sequels to action/shooter racers, cartoon racers, and finally, simulation-based racers. Despite this onslaught of racing titles, both the indy and stock car genres remain rather vacant. EA's hat being cast into the ring, is indeed reason to celebrate... if you dig high speed racing that is.

EA has acquired the rights to use the actual names of popular drivers from both the stock car and indy-type series, so expect to see some very recognizable racers. This level of accuracy follows through into the options, which are plentiful and detailed. After deciding on the series you will be taking part in, you can change the number of laps (3, 5, or 10), check-out records, or enter the car set-up menu to tinker with transmission, tires, front and rear wings, and gear ratios. While you cycle through the options, some high-quality FMV racing footage plays on screen, which, besides being a dandy visual, also helps to bring on that need for speed.

Getting into the actual game, the options continue with a busy pause menu offering race stats, engine/music kill-switch, and replays using 7 choice camera angles. With super responsive steering, nicely textured locales and just the right measure of difficulty, the racing itself is hot as well. Three cameras allow you to adjust comfortably to the onscreen action, and are easily accessible during play. The crashes and AI too, are reality based. Grass will slow you down and you'll lose traction, and should you bump another car, rather than flipping madly *a la* just about every other racer, you'll either spin, or take damage. The damage by the way is super accurate as well. Most minor screw ups will cost you some fiberglass and result in tweaked handling. Mario should be proud.

So far, *AR* is a complete package in all areas. I look forward to the final version and to welcoming *Andretti Racing* to my ever-growing PS racing collection. **C**

Tons of pro racers to choose from, including the whole Andretti family...

Michael Andretti

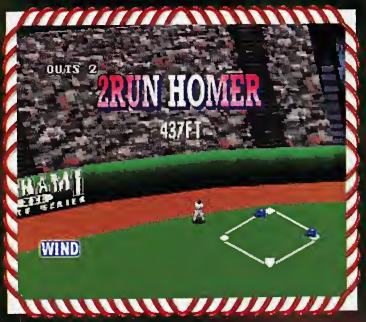
BIRTH: 10/5/62 - Bethlehem, PA
HEIGHT: 5' 7" WEIGHT: 148 lbs
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:
- 31 Indy Car victories
- 1991 Indy Car Champion
- 1983 Formula Mondial Champ

Mario Andretti

BIRTH: 2/28/40 - Montona, Italy
HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 160 lbs
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:
- Four time Indy Car Champion
- 1978 F1 World Champion
- 1979 Indy 500 Champion

Jeff Andretti

BIRTH: 4/14/64 - Bethlehem, PA
HEIGHT: 5' 8" WEIGHT: 148 lbs
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:
- 1991 Indy Car Rookie of the Yr.
- 1991 Indy 500 Rookie of the Yr.
- 1983 USAC Pro Ford Champ



BOTTOM OF THE 9TH

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - KONAMI
PUBLISHER - KONAMI
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

After taking the time to make it great, Konami's *Bottom of the 9th* is ready for its Saturn debut. *BO9* was released on the PS a couple of months back, and having enjoyed it then, I had high hopes for this version.

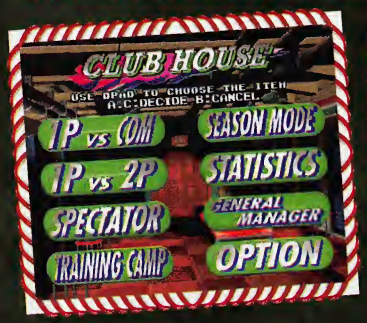
Konami is using the MLBPA license in *BO9*, so count on seeing the typical array of digitized shots of all your favorite players. It's really strange to see all these real players in the "Neptune" and "Apollo" leagues (Konami's brainchild) due to the absence of the MLB name. Naturally this also means we get bogus stadiums, but the eight offered are actually a perfect little collection of domes and grandstands in both natural and artificial turf.

The gameplay hasn't seen any changes in this version, although I'm partial to the Saturn pad for sports games (it just feels better than the PS pad). The pitching is standard issue baseball game stuff, with a nice variety of throws and good control over speed. However, batting is another animal completely. The designers are going for something *really* different and innovative. While in the batter's box, you actually have to direct a little square around, to give aim to your swing, and then press in time for the pitch. Hey, it works great. I think it's little strokes of ingenuity like this that help to shake up the baseball genre (which I believe is in need of a major facelift). The fielding and running controls aren't quite so 'innovative,' though they work very well.

JACQUES STRAP
AIMING MY SWING? SURE, WHY NOT?

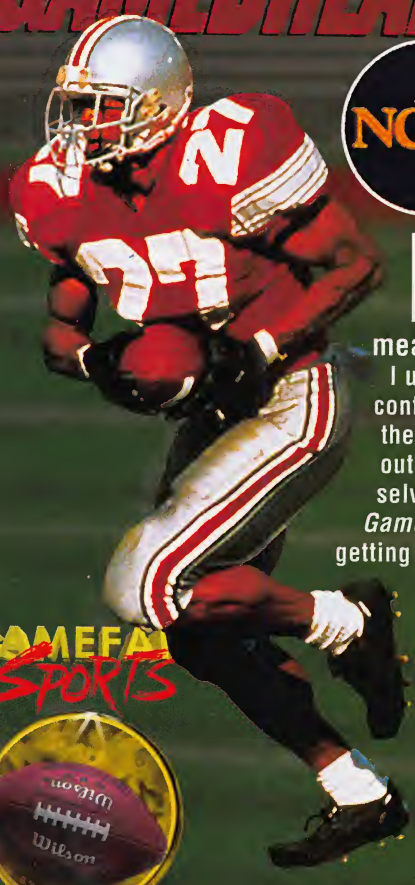
The graphics are right up to par with the PS version, which means kinda blocky, textured and shaded poly-players, good scrolling of the field, and clean effects during pans and zooms. The sound is a touch improved in this version, as it seems the stadium fx, player announcements, and commentator all have a crisper edge. The voices are really cool, and they stay cool well into the game, if you know what I mean. I'll have a *BO9* review very soon.

JS



GameBreaker

NCAA



GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY INTER.

PUBLISHER - SCE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-MULTI

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

JACQUES STRAP

I *love* football games. Sure, Soccer, baseball, and tennis are cool, but when Strap hits the gridiron he becomes a skinny, mean, fighting machine.

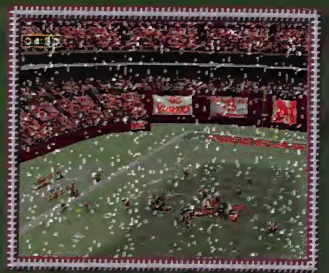
I usually follow the NCAA football season well into the conference and bowl games, so I'm quite pleased to see the college football scene showing up on the PS. Finding out that *NCAA GameBreaker* was coming from Sony themselves, I envisioned the engine and play mechanics of *GameDay* and waited with glee. As it turns out, we'll be getting another fantastic football title from Sony.

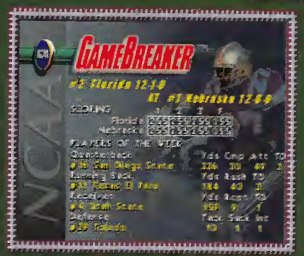
All 111 Division I-A Teams as well as the tops of Division I-AA are included in all 11 I-A conferences (BIG 10, SEC and the new WAC and BIG 12). Unbelievably, and I'm waiting for the final to swallow this one, all 110 stadiums complete with logos and end zone paint are included. Combined with all this goodness, real uniforms for every team – that's 110 jerseys – and complete 45 man rosters on each squad.

There's weather conditions, a great-sounding commentator/PA man, and 12 fight songs (of schools like Michigan and Notre Dame) performed by the actual USC marching band. Other bonuses involve a fully-playable season that includes substitutions, persistent injuries, total stat-tracking, and playoff options with Bowl play (Rose, Citrus, Gator – you name it, it'll probably be here!).

So far, the preview *GameBreaker* is playing perfectly. There are loads of plays, silky 30 fps motion, and a ton of moves to shake, fake, and pound the competition. Don't forget, football season is coming up, so the games should be flowin'...and I'll be there with a wide, toothy grin, ready to put 'em in print! ***JS***

CONTROL MULTIPLE CAMERA ANGLES!!





PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - GREMLIN

PUBLISHER-VR SPORTS/INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

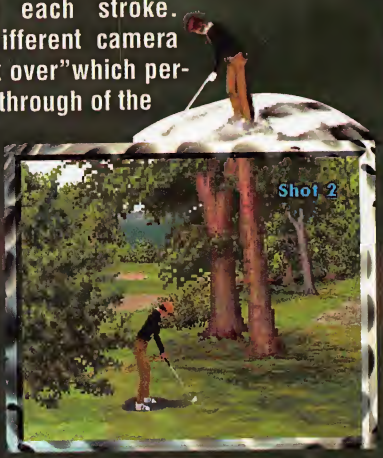
Unless you're a blue-blooded golf fanatic, it's common knowledge that in videogameland a golf title has to be pretty darn good to garner attention from most sports gamers. EA's *PGA Tour* series can do it, as well as a rare gem from Sega, T&E, or US Gold (Eidos), but few others have the required sports savvy to introduce a golf game that's entertaining. You would think that with the advent of 32-bit, we'd be getting some crazy-pulsating-millions-of-colors-60-fps-textured-poly-scaling-panning-zooming blissfest. Well, Interplay's *VR Golf '96* might just be the closest thing yet

For starters, *VRG'96* has many, many options, and they're all useful and easily accessible. When's the last time you were able to choose your golfer's skin type and outfit, check out the clubs, rankings, weather, commentary, crowd/music/fx, gimmies, mulligans, shot arcs, and hole maps? Like I said, *VRG'96* is loaded with options.

VRG'96's 3D engine scrolls the texture-mapped polygonal holes smoothly before and then during each stroke. Additionally, you can access many different camera angles,and a controllable course "walk over"which permits – literally – a frame by frame walk through of the particular course you're playing. At this point, the frame rate is pretty low, but our version is still in mid-production so it should be optimized nicely by its release.

VR Golf '96 plays perfectly, is enjoyable and highly detailed, and despite the slightly pixelly graphics, should turn out to be one of the years finest golf titles. Carried on the strength of its options and quality gameplay alone, I'm anxiously awaiting a final copy.

JS



JACQUES STRAP
THE IRONS ARE SO SHINY TODAY, I MIGHT RUN THROUGH TRAFFIC TO SHOW 'EM OFF! WHEE!

GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TIBERON ENT.

PUBLISHER - EA

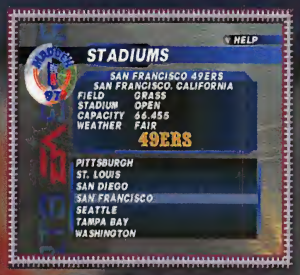
FORMAT - CD

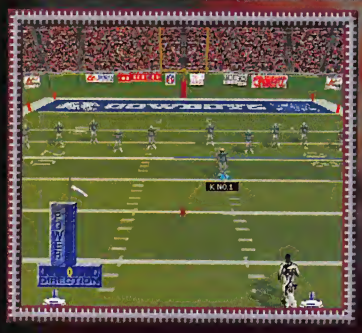
OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

JACQUES STRAP
IF I HAVE TO SEE MADDEN'S FREAKY MUG AGAIN, I'LL TACKLE HIM MYSELF!

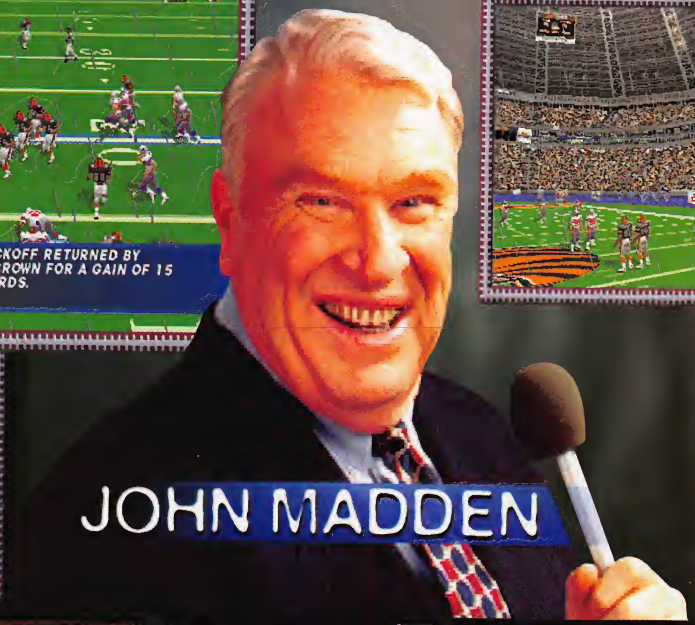


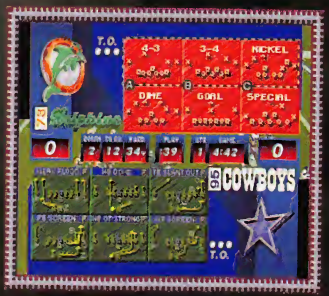


Madden's finally hitting the new 32-bitters. *Madden* on the 3DO gave us a small taste of the next generation of one of the greatest football series of all time. Now, *Madden '97* is coming to the Saturn and PlayStation providing a virtual feast to football fans everywhere!

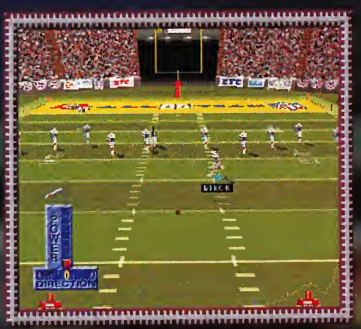
This time around, the developers have managed to acquire every possible NFL-related license in existence. The league, players, conference cups, Super Bowl, and even Super Bowl rings are all here, with photos, names, best-ever records and more. There's a full season to play, play-offs, exhibition, and all progress can be saved in 'User Records' for safe keeping. Almost every major organization in the NFL's grand history can be chosen and played. I'm talkin' the '50s and '60s best, '70s best, and so on. Historical teams, such as the '73 Dolphins, as well as the All-Maddens of all-time, this year's All-Madden, and several others are also present. Every real-life stadium is up for grabs, with day and night games in every weather condition known to football.

Although our alpha copy still contained a few bugs, it seems the developers have used the extra time to iron out many of the play mechanics that were so problematic in the past. As we know, since the 3DO *Madden*, EA has ditched the boxed-in passing windows in favor of the down field view offered by a full 3D scrolling engine. However, I found myself sticking with the Madden Classic Cam (it makes passing

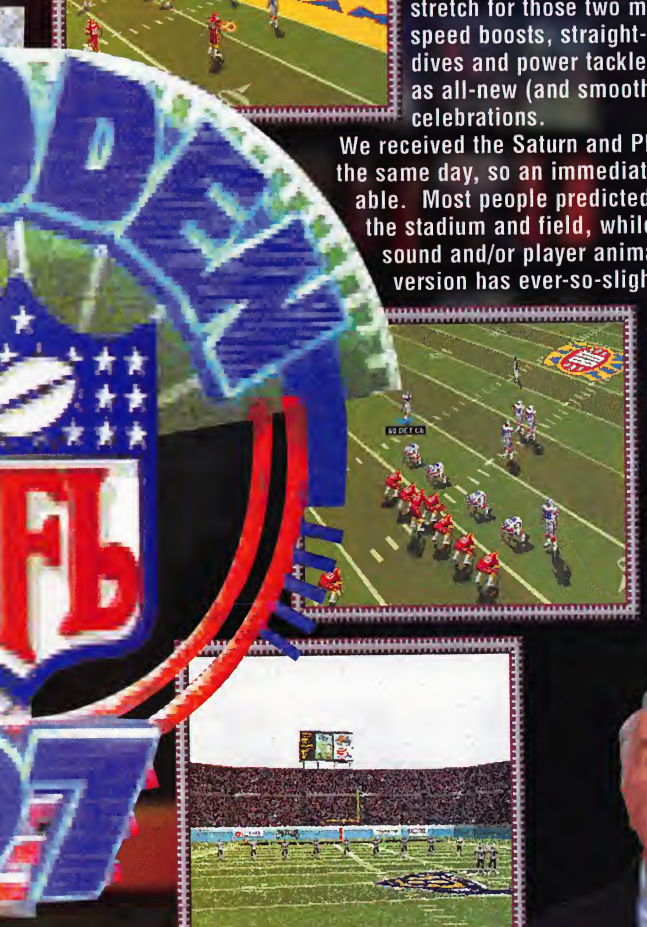




so much easier). The six other views are handy for specific running plays and/or short passes. The AI has been carefully tweaked so that the CPU actually demonstrates the characteristics familiar to each team, i.e. Dallas will actually gamble on 4th down and send Smith rocketing over the offensive line to stretch for those two missing yards. The speed boosts, straight-arms, hurdles, spins, dives and power tackles are all back, as well as all-new (and smoothly animated) end zone celebrations.



We received the Saturn and PlayStation versions on the same day, so an immediate side-by-side work-in-progress comparison was available. Most people predicted that the PS version would have more impressive 3D of the stadium and field, while the Saturn version would probably have the superior sound and/or player animation. Surprisingly, the opposite was true. Sure the PS version has ever-so-slightly better movement on the stadium (most likely due to more polygons), but the actual field motion is better on the Saturn in the early going. In regards to player animation, both versions rate about equally, with average player animation and brilliant end zone dances. I'm slightly partial (as usual) to the Saturn control as it just seems to respond a little faster, especially when controlling the running back. Overall, the Saturn *Madden '97* is the early (*very* early) favorite, but both games share the bulk of options and play mechanics needed to form a champion. This *is* true hot burnin' 32-bit *Madden*, and as a die-hard football fan, I can't wait for the end result. Look for a complete review very soon. ***JS***



GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TIBERON ENT.
PUBLISHER - EA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

JACQUES STRAP
MADDEN CRUNCH TIME IS BACK AGAIN.

GAMEFAN SPORTS

World Series BASEBALL II

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA

PUBLISHER - SEGA

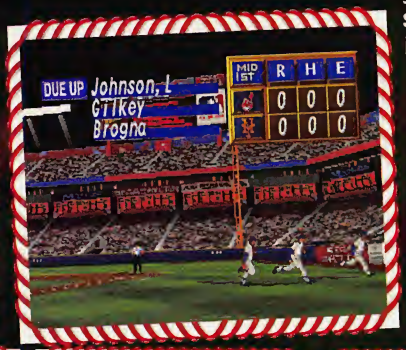
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

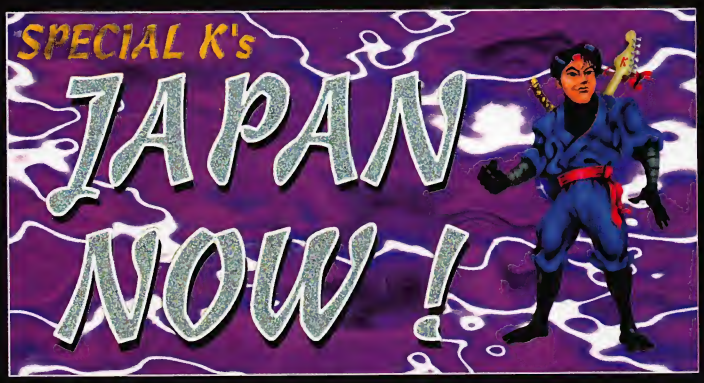
JACQUES STRAP
MORE HOT HARDBALL ACTION FROM SEGA



Sega's back with another *World Series* game that's destined for greatness already. They're sticking to this engine, it seems, and nobody can fault them for doing so. Combined with 100% baseball stats and licenses, *WSB 2* once again provides the most complete baseball package available for any system.

We've been informed that our preview version is only 25% complete, but there really doesn't look to be many refinements left to add. The full-man rosters of every real team in major league baseball are here, as well as every real stadium – accurate down to the foot. They're still not going the textured-polygon route for the players, which works out just fine, because the accurate feel available through old school hand-drawn/digitized players feels somehow more natural than polygonal ones. The stadiums remain polygonal with rich textures depicting the astro turf and grassy ball yards. I'm still impressed by *Greatest Nine*'s (the Japanese games the *WS* titles are adapted from) method of scrolling, as it seems to flow far smoother than most other baseball titles. While not as technically "smooth" as games like Konami's *Bottom of the 9th*, the actual screen movement facilitates the game for players, providing a feeling that seems second nature within the first few innings of play.

Expect Sega's best early this fall. *World Series Baseball 2* now officially marks the Saturn's undeniable force in the genre, and with killer versions of *Victory Goal '96*, *Prime Time*, and the powerful *Madden '97* from EA, if sports are your thing, you're in good hands. Strap'll be back in one to review the final, so make sure you keep an eye on your team so you can take 'em to the championship. ***JS***



Just who's this huge Japanese guy with long hair, you ask? He's the president of the super-creative third-party developer Warp, responsible for the amazing *D*. He's been in the game industry for eight years and is rapidly becoming an opinion leader at only 26! We interviewed him directly and asked him about his upcoming products, *Enemy Zero*, *D2*, and his opinions on systems like the N64 and M2. Welcome to the world of Warp!

REVEALING INTERVIEW WITH WARP - THE CREATORS OF D

KENJI ENO
PRESIDENT OF WARP

GF: Now that *Enemy Zero* (*E0*) is being made for the Saturn, there have been some concerns about the video quality. Do you expect to have to make sacrifices in the area of FMV clarity or size? Will you use Cinepak or TrueMotion?
KE: Actually, there wasn't much of a problem at all. The quality of the movie scenes are no less beautiful than the PlayStation version. Even if we put the two versions side-by-side, nobody could tell the difference, except, perhaps, an extremely technical person. Saturn games used to utilize a compression technology called Cinepak to play back FMV, but this is being replaced by a system called TrueMotion, which was developed by Duck. The first version of TrueMotion wasn't that great, but the latest rev is excellent. The new version has high compression efficiency and doesn't use too much disc space. Therefore we have no problems playing back the movie parts.

GF: How about the MPEG video card that's available for the Saturn in Japan?
KE: Not many people have the card anyway. Also, MPEG takes up a lot of disc space. There's no problem without it.

GF: Are there any future plans to release *E0* on other systems?
KE: There's a possibility we might release *E0* in countries other than Japan on the PlayStation or PCs. For Japan, however, Saturn is the only platform for *E0*.

GF: How complete was the PS version of *E0* when you announced you were changing the platform to SS?
KE: It was pretty much done (laugh). The base code was almost completed. CG FMV is the main thing in our game, so all we had left was rendering the rest of the game. If it was still a PS title, we could have released it after summer (laughs).

GF: You announced the platform change at the Tokyo Toy Show, but when was it actually decided?
KE: It was pretty close to the actual show date (laugh). It was less than a month before. The final decision was made two weeks before the Toy Show.

GF: Tell us how Saturn development's going and what the scheduled release date is.
KE: I feel like it's about 40% done. It looks almost completed. It'll probably come out at the end of November or the beginning of December '96. If we were only pressing one CD, it would definitely be November, but the press time for four CDs takes awhile.

GF: So, the SRP will be high?
KE: I don't know how Sega does it, but it'll only be ¥6800 in Japan (about $68 in the US).

GF: Wow, that's cheap for 4 CD-ROMs!
KE: I agree. It's too cheap (laughs). It's possible to release E0 at that price because it's a Saturn game... Sega helped us a lot. If it was PS, it'd be more expensive, since it would have to be on five to six CDs. I don't know how much it'll be in the US, but probably around $59.99 or in that range.

GF: Will *D2* really be an entirely real-time, polygon-based game? Please tell us about the play mechanics.
KE: *D2* will be released on the M2, not on other platforms. Maybe on PC, but no other consoles. It's basically all real-time polygons. To tell you the truth, however, we decided to start from scratch last month. The M2 specs will be better than the current one, so this was our last chance to change things. Also, if we continued developing what we were working on, by the time we were done the game wouldn't be current for today. We didn't want to release something like *Resident Evil* or *Alone in the Dark*. We wanted to release a real-time polygon adventure game that felt like the old PC game *Into the Sudden Shadow*.

GF: Are the previews that have been shown of it from intermissions, or are they just to convey the image of the game?
KE: They are actual game screens and we will be using them.

GF: Please tell us the storyline of *D2*. The demos show so many different characters, locations, and settings that it's hard for us to piece them together.
KE: Basically, the story begins about a year after *D*. Laura's on a plane somewhere and she's pregnant... Hmm... Actually, the story starts before this, during the Middle Ages. There was a feudal lord in Transylvania who desperately wanted a child to take over his country. He believed in the local superstitions that said you could have a child by sacrificing people by impaling them on stakes. The local people began to call him the Impaler King. Of course this was nothing but superstition, and he had no child. When his wife died, he became so desperate that he learned black magic and summoned the devil. He begged the devil to

"D2 WILL BE RELEASED ON THE M2, NOT ON OTHER PLATFORMS. MAYBE ON PC, BUT NO OTHER CONSOLES"

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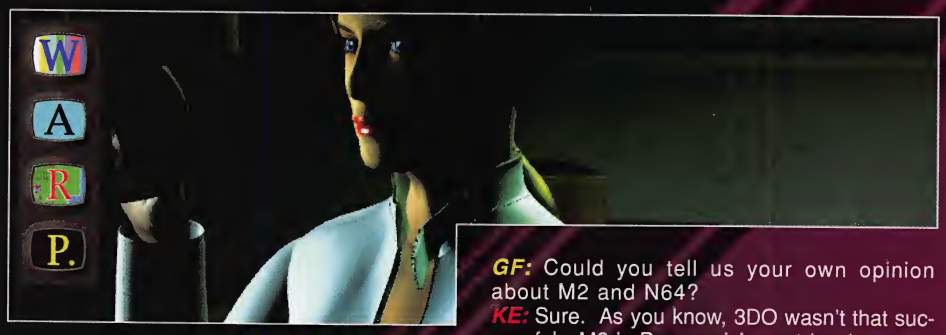
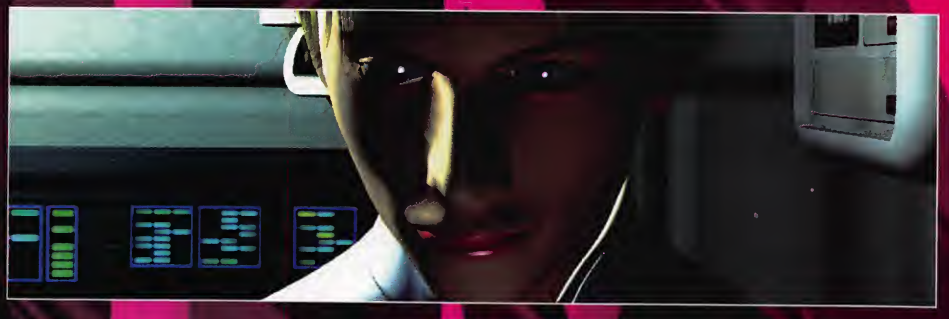


"THE M2 CAN RENDER AN AMAZING AMOUNT OF POLYGONS AND THEY WON'T BE DISTORTED AT ALL."

give him a child, that he would sacrifice his own life for one. The devil agreed and left Transylvania. The scene will change to the one I was telling you about before, the plane in 1997. The devil appears, surrounds the plane, and tries to crash it. Then he kidnaps Laura's baby. You can tell the baby disappears, because Laura's stomach becomes hollow. I think Laura dies in the plane, too... The scene changes back to the middle ages and the crying of the baby fades in... that's the opening story. The main character of the game is Laura's child. When the child grows up, the devil returns to Transylvania to come calling for the Impaler King's life, and destroys the castle. The child then takes off for the adventure to kill the devil.

GF: Did you actually come up with this storyline?
KE: Yes, it's continued from *D*, so I think it's really interesting.

GF: Could you tell us your own opinion about M2 and N64?
KE: Sure. As you know, 3DO wasn't that successful. M2 is Panasonic's next hardware, so they'll be working very hard on this machine. Though M2 is 64-bit, it's really a 128-bit class machine... but I can't actually explain how it works here. The machine has quite a bit of RAM and the CD speed is faster than I thought it would be. It also comes with an analog pad, so I think this hardware has the highest specs ever for today's machines. However, no hardware can live without great software. Since the M2 has 8M of RAM, it's easier to use the true power of the next generation. To be honest with you, as a developer of PS and SS software, it's really hard to deliver the true power of those systems because they don't have enough RAM. Also, since it's 128-bit class, you don't have to burden one CPU. Also, the M2 has an MPEG chip so it can do Video CD-caliber FMV. The M2 can render an amazing amount of polygons on the fly and they won't be distorted at all. The PlayStation can do a fantastic amount of polygons, but without 64-bit effects they become distorted. In games like *Doom*, the wall texture will be clear even if you're right next to it. Fog and lighting effects can be shown beautifully. All these effects add up to the best home system graphics ever... I feel like the M2 is like an enhanced Nintendo 64. With the M2's advanced light-sourcing, you can have multiple colored lights per environment, even on the same screen. It's amazing! Whether it sells or not depends on Panasonic's marketing, but at the price I've been quoted, I think it'll sell. The system deserves $700, but it'll be less than that. Also, all the games in development in Japan are original games. There are no arcade translations or sequels. Since all the games are original, I think the M2 will be popular in foreign countries.



GF: By the way, how many games are in development right now in Japan?
KE: As far as I know, 20 to 30 titles are in development. In Japan, sequels and arcade translations sell more. Since M2 games are so far original titles only, I think it will be more popular in foreign countries than in Japan. I've seen other M2 titles and they were amazing, so you guys should be expecting a lot from this system.

GF: How about Nintendo 64?
KE: It's a very good system, but is uses ROM cartridges. I don't think it's suitable for today's market when you think of the needs of the users. In Japan, N64 software is ¥9,800, or about $98. It may be cheaper in foreign countries, but isn't that expensive? From a developer's perspective, we have to create something worth $98... it's tough. As far as ability, they can't show that many polygons, but the screen looks beautiful because of mip-mapping and anti-aliasing. But since the range of textures is very low, you can only fit definite textures like grass and mud into a ROM cartridge. I feel it's like the polygon version of 16-bit. I do like the analog stick, though. I hope there'll be lots more analog games. Once you play a racing game with analog, you can't go back to digital. The only setback for the system is cartridge... that's all.

GF: Let me bring back a previous topic... can the analog stick for SS can be used in *E0*?
KE: Yes, you can use both analog and digital controllers. After the release of *NiGHTS*, there are very few games using the analog pad on the release schedule, so we decided to make *E0* playable with analog. I personally like Sega's analog controller more than Nintendo's. Maybe it's just because I have big hands, though (laughs).

GF: From your opinions of N64, you won't be developing games for N64, will you?
KE: Well, we have only two projects right now. We're working on *Enemy Zero* and *D2*. If we stick to schedule, *E0* will be done first, so we might consider N64, but cartridge is a very big wall for us. We're not a million-seller company and we actually don't care how many hardware units are out there.

GF: Would it be possible to transfer *E0* to N64?
KE: It's not possible because of the FMV.

GF: How about with the 64DD?
KE: It might be possible, but that will be available next summer, right?

GF: Hey, is it true that *D* was rendered on an Amiga?

"ALL THESE EFFECTS ADD UP TO THE BEST HOME SYSTEM GRAPHICS EVER... I FEEL LIKE THE M2 IS LIKE AN ENHANCED NINTENDO 64."

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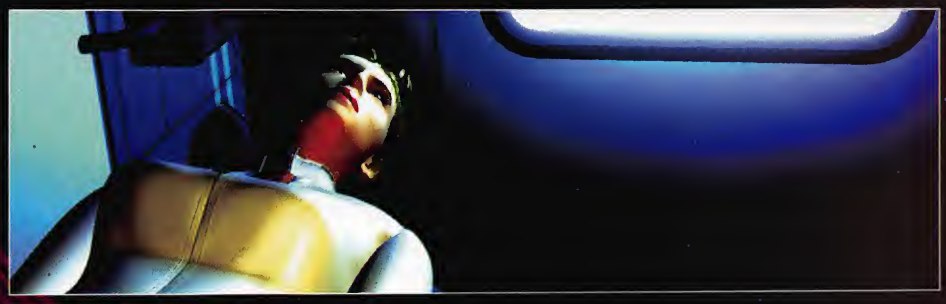
KE: Gee, you know a lot!! (laughs).

GF: Tell us about your current development tools.
KE: Right now, we're using Alias Power Animator, the one Rare uses. We're also using N-World.

GF: Do you have the foreign market in your mind when you develop games?
KE: As you know, we're not a million-seller company. We're not just making products,



"AROUND THAT TIME, I HEARD THAT 32-BIT, CD-ROM BASED SYSTEMS WERE COMING, AND I THOUGHT THAT THIS PLATFORM WOULD TAKE ME SOMEWHERE I WANTED TO BE. THAT'S WHEN I ESTABLISHED WARP"

we're creating works of art. If we were to just do what pleased us, though, we wouldn't make any money, so we have to consider the foreign market. In other words, we consider the foreign market very much! That's one reason why our theme is "fear." I think that fear is a worldwide, common feeling. The PC market is very big for me as well. So I do consider the US, as well as the European market.

GF: Are there any filmmakers that have influenced you?
KE: Yes, but a great deal of directors have influenced me, so I can't really answer that.

GF: How about any movies or music that have influenced you?
KE: My favorite was the Beatles when I was a kid. Then I started listening to techno music in Junior High. I love too many movies so I really can't pick one.

GF: How about your favorite foreign games?
KE: I've played a lot of adventure games from Sierra On-Line. That was about 15 years ago, though. Lately, I've been playing *Wipeout*, *Incredible Machine*, *Fade to Black*, *Alien Trilogy*, etc. For sports, I love EA titles. The foreign market is great, don't you think? From now on, the foreign market will grow!

GF: If so, why don't you start a company in the US or Europe? (laughs)
KE: Actually, we're starting next January! More than half of our staff are moving to San Francisco. I'm going as well.

GF: Why did you choose San Francisco?
KE: I get tired in Los Angeles. I like San Francisco. Since I go to the US every month, I love America!

GF: Could you tell us about your background?
KE: I entered the video game industry about eight years ago. I was working for a subcontracted development company for about a year, but I couldn't use 100% of my ability. Therefore, I quit and established my own company, but we were just a developer... not a publisher. We did this for about four and a half years, but I wasn't having fun. Around that time, I heard that 32-bit, CD-ROM based systems were coming, and I thought that this platform would take me somewhere I wanted to be. That's when I established Warp, two years and three months ago.

GF: How about your childhood?
KE: I bought a computer because I wanted to compose music in school. The NEC computer I bought had a PSG, or Programmable Sound Generator, so I could compose music with it. Then I decided to learn Basic to program games. I decided to do a version of *Pac-Man*, but the algorithms were extremely difficult. I then realized that making games was extremely technical work. So, I bought a computer that could utilized machine language, and I started to make games. One day, I entered a programming contest in a magazine and won a few thousand bucks. At that time I didn't have a VCR or a TV, so I just wanted to get money to buy them. After the contest, though, I got tired of programming and stopped dealing with computers for a while. So, for five or six years, I was really into movies, music and art.

GF: So, you're the one doing music for all Warp games?
KE: Yes, I did *D*.

GF: Aren't you pretty young?
KE: Yeah, I just turned 26.

GF: Wow! Well, anyway, what type of game do you want to work on from now on?
KE: My schedule's been set already. After *E0* and *D2*, we're making a network game like *Doom* and we're also making a full CG movie next year.

GF: DVD will be available pretty soon. We've heard rumors that video game hardware using DVD is in development. Do you have any plans to release games for this?
KE: Yes, DVD systems will be available soon. I've been talking to people about this, but it'll be a while before DVD-ROM's available.

GF: This is kind a stupid question, but why didn't you put nipples on Laura in *E0*?
KE: Actually, we tried it (laughs). But everyone just kept staring at her nipples, disregarding our other CG! Since CG's so realistic, it looks really erotic. I wanted to create something beautiful.

GF: For our last question, where did you get the name "Warp?"
KE: First of all, warp means "twisted space." For example, in cartoons, to transfer from Planet A to Planet B, the fastest way to is to twist space and move suddenly to your destination. There are so many channels through which game software transfers between the developer and users such as such as retail stores, distributors, etc. We wanted to have a direct relationship with users by "warping" our games to them. Also, our thoughts are twisted. That's why we named our company Warp.

GF: Thank you for your time.

Interviewer
Kei Kuboki

"WE WANTED TO HAVE A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH USERS BY 'WARPING' OUR GAMES TO THEM. THAT'S WHY WE NAMED OUR COMPANY WARP."

Welcome, my children. I am the voice of Other Stuff. It is I, who, through the miracles of modern technology known as the telephone and the postal service, take it upon myself to ingest a multitude of rumor, speculation, and propaganda that would make the political spin doctors dizzy. And yet, somehow, I always manage to include only the absolute truth in this column. (Heh, heh...) Anyway, on that sarcastic note, on with Other Stuff:

KONAMI KORNER

It's been confirmed at last! Sources at Konami itself have informed me that a 64-bit *Castlevania* is in development for the Nintendo 64 "fun machine." Although they wouldn't specify whether or not it was two or three dimensional, "a source" who has seen the demo, told us it is entirely 3D, and makes *Mario 64*'s graphics and sound seem weak in comparison. *Castlevania 64* is due to be unveiled at this year's Shoshinkai (November, Tokyo), and is currently slated for release sometime late in 1997.

Meanwhile, in Konami PlayStation news, *Castlevania* PS's release date has been pushed back to December in Japan, which could put the Stateside release off until sometime after February of next year. Chances are that the Saturn will not be graced with a *Castlevania* game, although Konami may want to consider the installed user base the Saturn has in Japan.

Following the "old is new" trend in the videogame world, Konami will have an "arcade classics" disc coming out soon, to include *Gyruss*, *Frogger*, *Time Pilot*, and *Scramble*, for both Saturn and PlayStation. Look for that sometime in '97, as well as a sequel to *Gradius*, to hit PlayStations after an arcade release.

CAPCOM KOR– errr, CORNER

After various conflicting reports reached the office, expect test versions of *Street Fighter 3* to reach arcades sometime between November '96 and March '97. What *is* known is that it will be two-dimensional, using the new CPS3 hardware. Rumor has it, though, that, with the exceptions of Ryu and Sagat, *SF3* will have an entirely new cast of characters. Hmmm, strange... More on that as it develops.

While *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is being developed (concurrently with *Street Fighter 3* – confusing, I know), Capcom is "taking suggestions." At their website, they have a survey to see which characters people would like to see, as well as some gameplay elements, like chain combos, etc. Online gamers can choose from characters from *Final Fight*, *Strider*, *Darkstalkers*, and of course, all *SF* titles.

Another interesting bit of info, is that either *SF3* or *SFA3* will be available exclusively (at least for a few months) for the Nintendo 64. Which of the two isn't clear yet, but we'll let you know.

NINTENDO COR – errr, NEWS

In ongoing *Mario 64* news, expect the American release of *Super Mario 64* to include much more in the way of voice. Sources at NOA tell us that the intro and the ending will feature voices instead of the text which is in the Japanese version. Even Lakitu will speak! In addition, an "idle" tidbit: When Mario lays down to sleep (you know, when you put the controller down for a minute or two), he'll begin to mumble things like "...lasagna..." or "...spaghetti..." Even some of the polygonal textures may be updated. We'll know for sure, soon!

And now... *Zelda*! Word is, the upcoming 64-bit *Zelda* will have a playing environment twice the size of *Pilotwings*, and will feature 5 selectable camera modes, on-the-fly camera angle changes (*a la Mario*), and possibly even a custom color mode, whereby you can choose the colors of your character's clothing, etc.

Nintendo Power subscribers may be in luck, as we've heard (but not confirmed) that a large number of videos will be sent out to subscribers around the first week of September, which will have previews of many N64 titles to be released in North America.

Official N64 game announcements this month include *Yoshi's Island 64*, *F-Zero 64*, *Climber*, and a golf title based on the 8-bit Nintendo's *Mario Golf*. Tentative sizes: 96 megs for *Yoshi's Island* and 64 megs for *F-Zero*.

SQUARE CORNER (Hey, that works!)

A sequel to the recently released (in Japan) *Tobal No. 1* is already in the works (*Tobal No. 2*, perhaps?), according to a source at Square Japan. The tentative release date is December of this year.

The release date for *Final Fantasy VII* has been moved up to possibly as early as February '97, instead of the Summer release we've been expecting. *Final Fantasy V*, *VI* and *VII* may be headed for the PC, although it's possible it'll be sold only in Japan.

VF3 UPDATE!!!

In Tokyo, test versions of *VF3* are already at arcades, and apparently, people are lining up around the block to play it. Some arcades have reported a two-hour wait. The official arcade release is September in Japan, and November for the good ol' U.S. of A. We'll have an in-depth look at *VF3* soon.

SEGA UNVEILS THE SECRET FIGHTING VIPER! THE PEPSIMAN?

As you may know, Sega of Japan's marketing people made video game history by filling the Japanese version of *Fighting Vipers* with Pepsi logos. Evidently it wasn't enough that Sega sold Picky's soul to the Pepsi corporation (Pepsi logos appear on his skateboard and twice in the background of his stage), as SOJ has just taken their advertising plan a big step further. A deal has just been reached to put Pepsiman, Pepsi's Japanese mascot, into *Fighting Vipers* as a "guest character." No shots have been shown yet, nor do we know anything about his moves or how you'd be able to control him.

For the curious, here's a typical Pepsiman TV commercial. A bunch of women are sitting on a beach, looking hot [note the double meaning]. Then, what's that in the distance? Why it's Pepsiman, surfing in on a killer wave. Presumably, he then cools them down with a cold Pepsi, although I like to think the suns rays are amplified by his metallic body, frying the models to a crisp.

The American version of *Fighting Vipers* has no Pepsi sponsorship, so we can only guess at what will happen to Pepsiman. Will he be deleted altogether? Or will they just remove his logo and make him Dural's cousin, or something? Find out next issue!

Gah! Just one page for the ol' Posty this month, but don't worry, I'll just shrink the font size down till it's practically illegible to squeeze it all in. Let's start with this month's rant:

Dear Postmeister,

Let me start off by saying that you're not the only *MST3K* fan out there. Me and my friends all got a big kick out of the *MST3Kombat* drawing. Thank you for printing it. Now, on with the letter. I've got several observations and (yup, you guessed it), some questions. Ready? First, observations: 3D fighting games SUCK! I enjoy 3D games like *Jumping Flash!* or *Resident Evil* just as much as the next guy, but *Tekken 2*? *Virtua Fighter 3*? You can keep 'em. *Street Fighter Alpha 1* and *2*, *Darkstalkers* and *X-Men* all put those blocky, polygon-riddled pieces of junk to shame. And when *Darkstalkers 3* and *Street Fighter III* come out, there will be glorious hand-drawn, anime-style graphics galore. Capcom will rule the world! HA HA HA HAH!

Second observation: Saturn doesn't suck. I own a PlayStation and plan on getting a N64 (just for *SFIII*, 'cause *KI2* sucks too), but I'm looking very hard at a Saturn. I mean, look at all the RPGs for the thing! Not to mention *Keio Gekitai* or *NiGHTS*. Stop putting down other systems just because you don't own them, people.

Third observation: The American branch of most Japanese game companies don't care. Look at Capcom. They altered the name of several characters in *Darkstalkers*, they told us Pyron was an alien when one look at him and his stage will tell you he's a demon, they switched the names of some of the bosses in *SFII*, some more names were changed in *Alpha*, they allowed that horrible live action movie and the equally awful USA cartoon of *Street Fighter* to be made, and let's not forget the *Darkstalkers* cartoon either. Oh, did I mention the dubbed version of the animated *Street Fighter II Movie*? Or the box art on *SF Alpha*? Sure they used the original Japanese art on *Darkstalkers*, but given their track record, I'm sure that was a fluke on CoA's part. Oh yes, how about letting Acclaim hack half of the frames out of *X-Men*, just so they could save some money? Because I hear the Japanese *X-Men* for Saturn was near arcade perfect. And what about the scenes cut from *Resident Evil*? I'm gonna have to buy the import just to see things that never should have been taken out in the first place! You see, they just don't care.

Fourth observation: Going back to my third observation, American box art sucks. Especially Sega of America's box art (and no, I won't bring up *Astal* aga- oops, never mind). Maybe now that American PS games will come in regular CD cases, we'll see more Japanese art on the packages. I mean, don't these companies realize it's stupid to pay someone to redraw art that they already have, and badly at that? Are they on drugs, or what?

Okay, I'll get off my soapbox now and get to the questions.

1) Will *Chrono Trigger 2* be 2D (I hope) or 3D like the unfortunate *Zelda 64* and *Final Fantasy VII* (which I'll still play, but won't enjoy as much as *FFVI*)? Please tell me it'll be 2D.

2) Is *Mario 64* as great as it looks? Despite the fact that it's 3D, I still think it looks incredible.

3) When, if ever, are the other *Final Fantasy* games coming out over here? Is it true they're going to be on PlayStation?

Okay, that's all I wanted to say and ask (for now). Keep up the good work, fight the good fight, and may the Force be with you. Push the button, Frank.

Patrick Little
Elizabethton, TN

Whoah! I must spring to Capcom's defense! Pyron was an alien in the original storyline, they had legitimate legal reason to change one of the names in SFII, Capcom themselves didn't release the anime here, and X-Men was the same in Japan as it is in America, with frames cut simply because of RAM problems. And only 1 or 2 scenes were cut in Resident Evil, *and they did make it more challenging, which was wise and good. Otherwise, they're guilty as charged, but you've got to love 'em because A) they bring out everything here, including their RPGs, B) they actually released* Resident Evil *in the US the same exact day that* Bio Hazard *came out in Japan, which, to my knowledge, has never happened before. I do agree with the general sentiment, but your bile should be directed elsewhere.*

Oh, and um, don't hold your breath waiting for Street Fighter III *on the Nintendo 64. That was a rumor, and a slim one at that...*

1) Who knows?
2) Yes!
3) Final Fantasy V *is, FINALLY, going to come out on Windows '95. Otherwise, no luck... And thanks for the letter, Captain F!*

First of all I must say, that your web page is so far the best, I've seen until now. Thanks for the great pictures of *Breath of Fire III*. I really hope, there'll be an English version of the game. Maybe you know more...

And there's something else, I must tell you: This is not meant as an insult, but for German ears (like mine e.g.) Postmeister sounds INCREDIBLY STUPID!!! But never mind. I´d like to ask you, if you could send me and a friend of mine a release schedule for new PS games in Japan and in the USA. It would be really helpful, 'cause here in Germany, it is terrible, especially if you're into RPGs! We didn't get *Final Fantasy III*, we didn't get *Chrono Trigger* and all official German games run in terribly slow 50 HZ. This is horrible! This means, we have to build some special chips into the systems, so the games can be run in original speed. Just imagine, playing *Final Fantasy* with big black letterboxes and shrunken characters! And the most horrible thing is, on a German SNES you can't see the full ending, unless you have this special chip in the system, which costs 100 DM (that's about $65). Well, I think I've cried enough and I hope you could understand my English, which I learned mostly by playing *Phantasy Star II*.

Thomas Nickel, Marco Ehrmann
DragonKnight@t-online.de

Wow, to think that some other country actually considers America to be advantaged in terms of RPGs. I guess we really do have so much to be thankful for. Well, not so much, but slightly more than you do. And sorry, I don't have any release schedules available... Just keep reading the mag, I guess (and I'll keep cashing the checks! Ha ha!). And if the name Postmeister offends your German ears, I don't even want to know what you thought of the first (and last) ever German-language edition of Postmeister last issue.

Dear Postmeister,
Answer my questions:
1) Will there ever be a *Princess Tomato 2*?
2) When is *Eternal Champions* for Saturn coming out?
3) Will there be a sequel to *Super Mario Bros. 3*?
4) Is *Shining Wisdom* good?

Brandon Lee
Cleveland, OH

Sorry, loyal readers, I know that this isn't the greatest of letters to publish. But Brandon was kind enough to include a dollar with his letter, and the poor penniless Postmeister had been hungrily eyeing that bag of Waffle Chips in the vending machine all day, so I sold out. Just this once. Promise.

1) Um... I would guess not. Was pretty cool though.
2) I haven't heard anything about it lately.
3) You mean, besides the 4th, 5th, and 6th Super Mario games?
4) It's okay.
Thanks for the waffle chips!

I have the import N64, and it is purely incredible. *Mario 64* is without a doubt the greatest game I have ever played, and I've been playing games for quite a while. What do you think about it? Anyways, I have some questions about the future of the system.

1. Is Enix working on *Dragon Quest 7*? When can we expect it? Are they really making Saturn games?
2. A large mail order company has both *Street Fighter* and *Mega Man* on sale for the N64. They insist that these games are on their way. I would pre-order both if I was sure the company was right. Are they?
3. Most other online sites have said that Nintendo and Square are on the verge of re-establishing their partnership. Have you heard anything about this?
4. Will American controllers and peripherals work with the Japanese N64? How about the 64DD?
5. When will the 64DD be released and how much will it cost?
6. Can you tell me if anything for the N64 is in the works for the following titles: *Castlevania, Contra, Ninja Gaiden* (I doubt that one), or *Earthworm Jim*?

Thanks,
Michael Craft
birdie@mis.net

1) Enix is probably working on Dragon Quest VII, *or at least thinking about it, but no one knows what the system will be... Enix has yet to announce that they're publishing any Saturn titles, but Quintet, their best development team (they made* Actraiser, Tenchi Sozo, *and many other quality titles) is making their next title on Saturn, and Enix may or may not be the publisher. The game will probably the next in the loosely linked* Soulblazer-Illusion of Gaia-Tenchi Sozo *series.*
2) Neither has been announced, they've only been speculated. I'd hold onto that cash...
3) Square denies it, and I haven't heard it from any reliable sources.
4) Probably, I've heard it's the same basic hardware coming out of the same factory... But nothing's for sure till September 30th.
5) Sometime in '97, and around $200. In Japan, of course.
6) I've heard rumors about Castlevania, *but otherwise, nope...*

Write to me or I'll run for President!

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BRE SOFTWARE	139
CAPCOM	3
CRAVE	144
DIEHARD GAMERS CLUB	143
FATBOY	138
GAMEMASTERS	142
INTERACT	55
KONAMI	23, 27
NINTENDO	IFC-1
PLAYMATES	19, 25, 31
SEGA OF AMERICA	7-9,13,15, BC
T-HQ	21
TOMMO	140-141
UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE	11
UNIVERSE VIDEO GAMES	139

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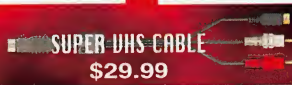

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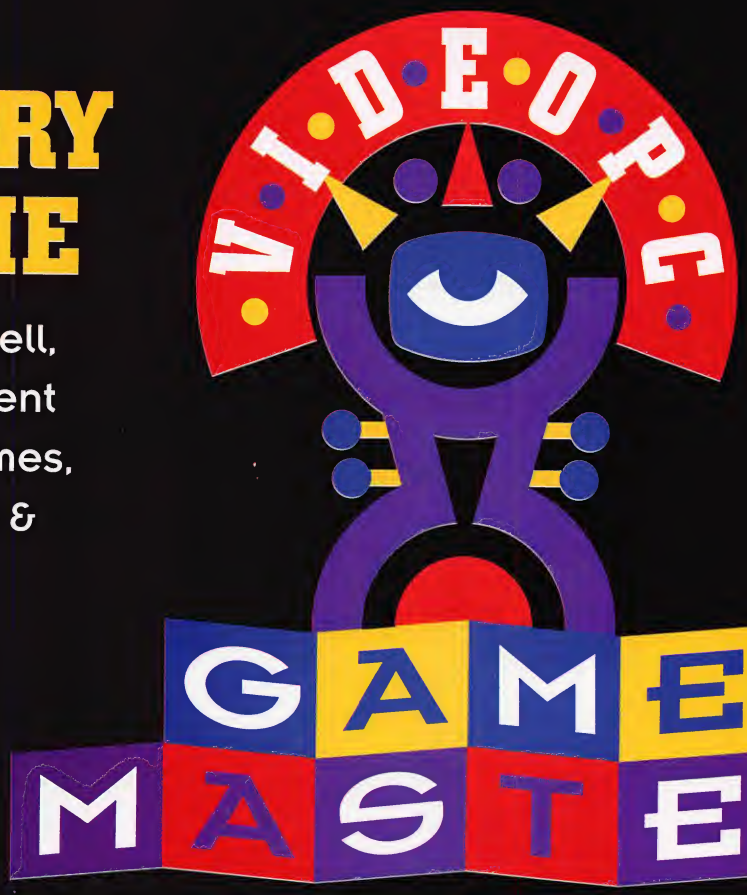

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